inside image

#119

TODD McFARLANE
BATMAN VS. SPAWN
— AND LOTS MORE!

ROB LIEFELD
IMAGE: YEAR TWO
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JUST GOOD COMICS

FROM SHADOWHAWK
TO THE NEW 1963 —
JIM VALENTINO
(NOT TO MENTION — NORMALMAN!)

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S
COMICS INTERVIEW

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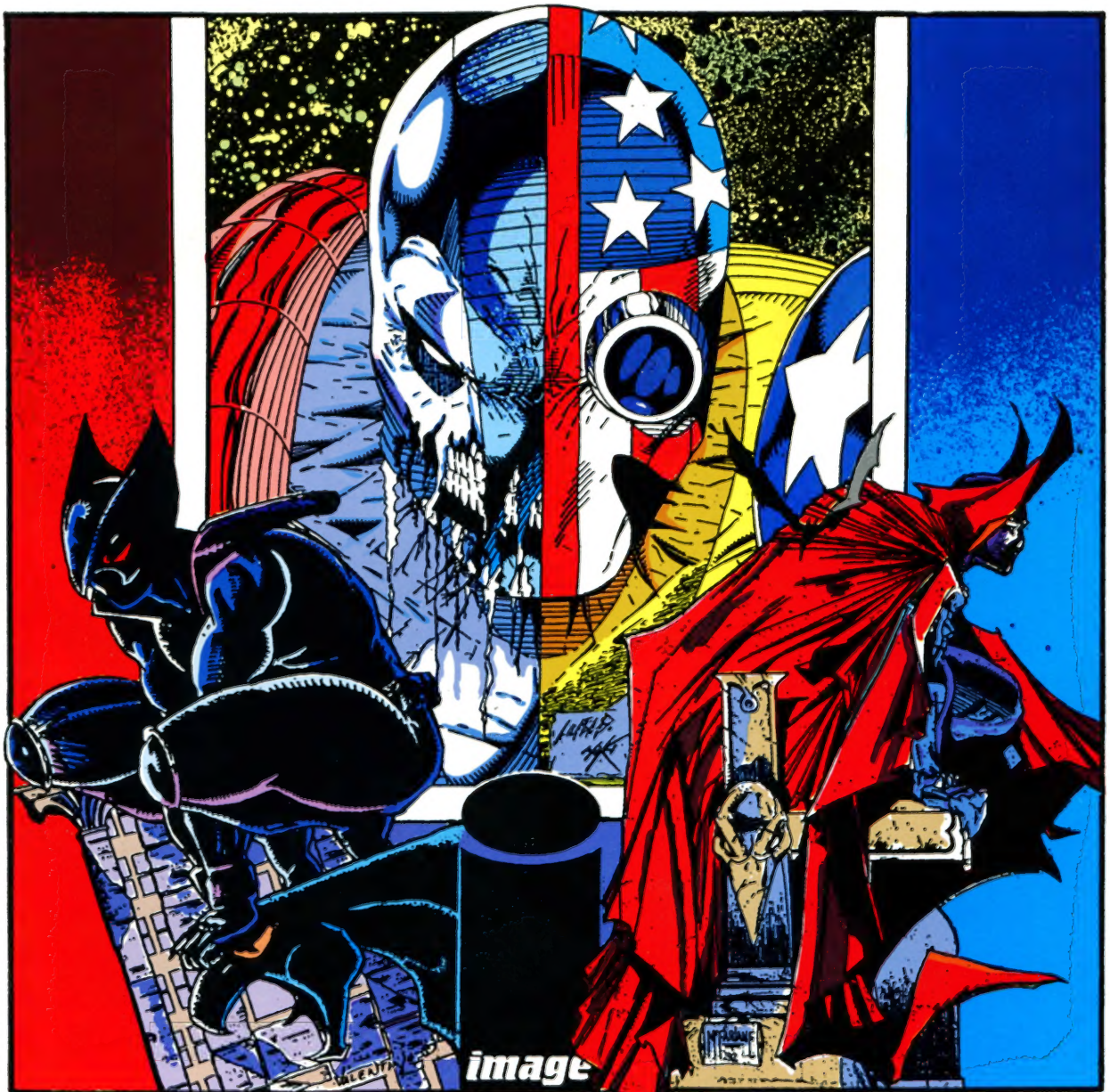

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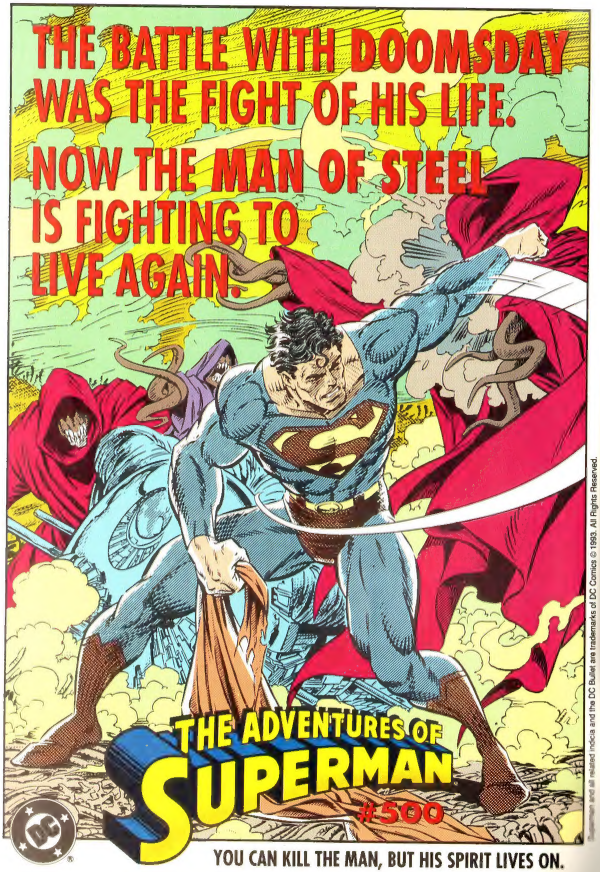
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McFARLANE, VALENTINO & LIEFELD
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DIANE VALENTINO

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UP FRONT

I'm writing this editorial on an old "Underwood Five" manual typewriter, dragged out of disuse and refitted with a new ribbon that I thoughtfully (and thankfully) packed away with it quite a few years ago. I went to bed not too long after dark last night, and arose not too long after it became light outside this morning. Began the day by tossing some kindling on the embers in the fireplace, and building a fire for both heat and cooking. Went out into the cold and filled the lamps and portable heater with kerosene. Hauled several loads of logs down through the snow to be sure of a sufficient supply to last through tomorrow morning.

Meanwhile, Julia was cooking brunch on the fireplace grate, while "Computer Bill" worked on fixing the portable radio so we could get word from the outside world on when civilization ("as we know it") would be back in business.

Although you're probably reading this in the full-blown flush of spring, we're stranded high atop Screamer Mountain in northeast Georgia during the so-called "storm of the century," snowed and iced in and being reminded of the everyday wonders we take for granted — such as electricity, computers, faxes and TV — and of what life must have been like not that long ago for our forebears, who had to devote almost all their waking hours to the basics of just surviving.

It's fun, for a short spell, to "rough it" (champagne and cognac, tomatoes, bacon, hashbrowns and toast for brunch), and makes me realize it's always a good idea to hang onto some of that primitive technology, such as kerosene lamps, manual typewriters, and alternate sources of heating that are not dependent on electricity, among others.

For while we live in the "world of tomorrow" that was sheerest science fiction in our parents' time, we're still only a half-step away from the past. To all intents and purposes, the technological revolution that has impacted all mankind is only about 100 years old. In another age, I'd be going out to hitch up the team of horses, instead of waiting for word that the four-lane interstate highways have been cleared for automobile traffic.

We have a lot to be thankful for, as times like this remind me. (And a special nod to the telephone companies for somehow managing to provide service despite the fact that most of the state, including Atlanta, is without electricity, a minor miracle in itself; even though we're physically cut off from the rest of the world, we just received a phone call from concerned friends in France — another anomaly in this odd modern world.)

-Dave

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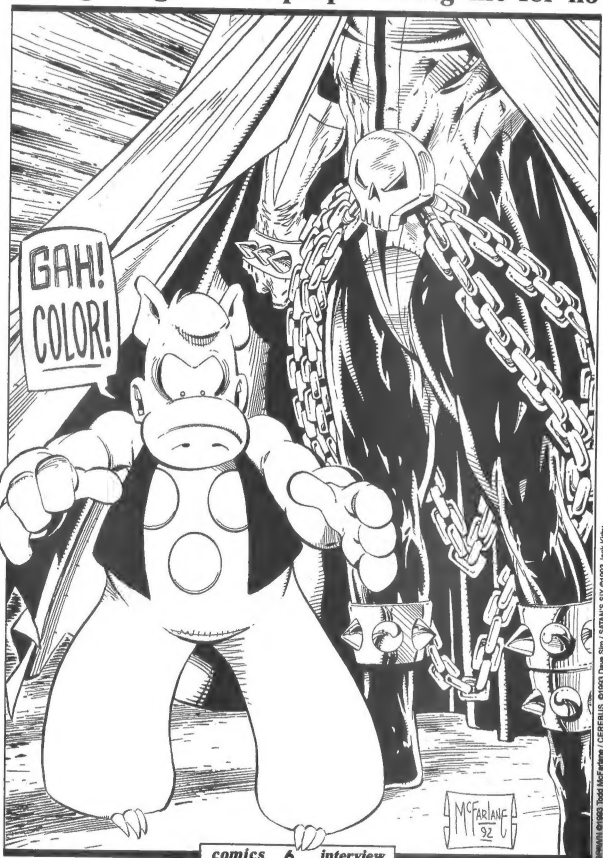

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reason. I'm not doing nothing to aggravate them."

TODD McFARLANE

Jim Salicrup has known Todd for a long time — having edited McFarlane on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN at Marvel and unleashing him to write and draw the all-new adjectiveless SPIDER-MAN series that set sales records and ushered in, for lack of a better term, what we'll call the Image Era of creator-driven mega-million-selling comics. Now Jim's at Topps Comics and Todd's one of the kingpins at the new, Malibu-free Image, so let's listen in between the static and feedback of Salicrup's speaker phone to hear what's in the works from the big hot Toddy himself . . .

TODD McFARLANE: Is this going to be one of those high intellectual pooh pooh ones? *(Laughter.)*

JIM SALICRUP: *Well, speaking of which, why the hell did you ever do that interview with Gary Groth?*

TODD: *(Laughter.)* For two reasons: #1, I could say stuff in there that I could never say in THE WIZARD; and #2, I knew that every one of my peers was going to be reading it. So, all the guys who *hate* me, I gave them a *reason* to hate me.

JIM: (Laughter.) *Why is that, Todd?*

TODD: I'm getting *tired* of fucking people *hating* me for no reason. After all, I'm not doing nothing to aggravate these people, so fuck it! If they're going to hate me, give them a reason. So I just go, "I'm gonna do an interview that pisses everybody off." The guys that get the joke will be able to see that the whole interview is like a joke, but the guys that take this business too seriously will go, "That transient homosexual!" *(Laughter.)*

JIM: *So, now Gary's going after poor Dave Sim.*

TODD: Look, see, I don't get a problem with **Gary Groth** because **Gary Groth** thinks the opposite of me, you know what I mean.

JIM: *I think he would be flattered to hear that.*

TODD: Well, I've *told* Gary all he needs is a date. Fuck, he just needs a date and to coach a baseball team and he'd be normal. *(Laughter.)* But, see, **Gary Groth** is like . . . it's like me being an atheist and him being, you know —

JIM: *A religious fanatic?*

TODD: Whatever, I don't care. I'm just saying that if I say one thing and he says the opposite, it's because of his *beliefs*, you know. The guys that astound me are my fellow peers that do superhero comic books, that are basically *more* fanatical than Gary as far as I'm concerned, that do the same thing I do! Those are the guys that boggle my mind. That **Gary Groth** says black when I say white doesn't bother me. That my fellow superhero peers say black when I say white, that one stuns me more than anything.

JIM: *Well, how are you and Dave Sim getting along?*

TODD: Oh, I just got his script for #10; it's the coolest! It's the coolest! It's 22 pages of a political soapbox for Dave. It works! It's too funny; this is too cool. It's got Wonder Woman in it, it's got Batman, it's got the Thing — it's got *everybody* in it. It's a keeper for the ages.

JIM: *What made you include Dave?*

TODD: What made me include Dave? Two reasons: #1, he's Canadian; and #2, he's always been a fuck and I kind of

Previous page: Todd's 10th cover for his SPAWN — guest starring the writing talents of Dave Sim. (Cerebus is also present for this issue, here, in glorious black and white, and on newsprint . . . as it should be!) Here: Todd inks the first cover of Topps Comics' SATAN'S SIX, created and pencilled by Jack Kirby.

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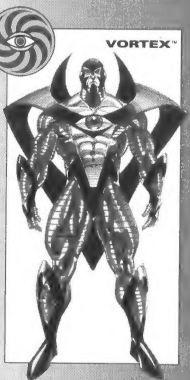

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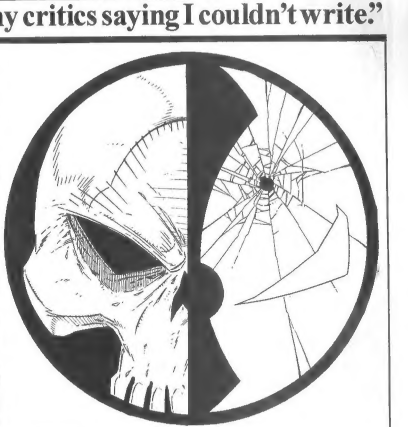
"I couldn't take my critics saying I couldn't write."



admire guys like him.

JIM: *How about the other issues. How are they? How's Alan Moore?*

TODD: As we're talking I'm just finishing up the last couple of pages on it. You know, the stuff with the other writers, I'm *hoping* that people don't think that Alan Moore is going to do WATCHMEN in 22 pages, you know. In fact, it's 24 pages; he wants to expand it. But, you know what I mean, I hope people aren't going "Okay, give us that great, deep, philosophical story in 24 pages." It's not going to be that. Even though the story takes place in Hell, it's kind of a funny story I think, and it's kind of weird and whacked and stuff. What Alan and Neil Gaiman have done so far, and Dave, it's just one issue each, take it for what it's worth and enjoy it for 20 minutes then leave it at that. Don't try to read anything deep into it.

JIM: *Why'd you get these guys in the first place, need I ask?*

TODD: Why did I get them? I couldn't take my critics saying I couldn't write. I finally caved in. *(Laughter.)* It's *not* the critics! No. You know me, Jim, long enough to know that whenever anybody goes left I go right. So, right now everybody seems to be selling comic books on covers and not content, so being that everybody's doing it *that* way I decided to try a different angle, which is trying to sell it on the content. I'm not saying one is better than the other — I'll argue which one is — but I'm just saying if tomorrow everybody tried to sell on content I'd probably try and sell it on cover. I got to where I am by doing the opposite of everybody; it doesn't mean that I think it's *better*, it's just whenever you do something *different* it seems to sell.

Plus, I think we're getting a little bit away from what used to sell comic books, too. My attitude is . . . like people go, "Oh, Todd, your gimmick is you're bringing on the writers." At what point are we at in comic books right now that because I decide to bring on quality writers it's considered a gimmick? *(Laughter.)* Years ago it used to be because it was a hell of a book.

JIM: *What did you think of Sim having to defend his decision to write SPAWN in COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE?*

TODD: Whatever. I mean, look, I don't have control over anybody. I've been blasted enough in the press and I never answer any of that, but I'm not gonna tell anybody else not to. Dave, I guess, feels that when he reads that stuff, he wants . . . if it's erroneous he just wants to defend his honor. I can live with it, you know. Even to the fact that, if he says something that's really not even that correct, I don't even correct Dave. I don't correct Dave, I don't correct the critics, I don't correct anybody. Let 'em do whatever; the more talk about it, the better it is.

JIM: *Well, let me see if I can find the quote here.*

TODD: I didn't let a little thing like not being able to write stop me; is that the one you're going to throw at me?

JIM: *No, not that one. This is Dave: "Image, as Todd explains it, is just that little 'i' logo on the cover which creators who are invited to join their loose-knit coalition are welcome to use. I even asked Todd on a recent visit to his home, 'If one of the creators decided to move from Malibu to another company or, you know me, self publish, can they take the "i" logo with them?' His answer was an unequivocal yes. Sounds like freedom to me." Then Gary asks you about this and you said, "No, no, Dave's full of shit."*

TODD: I said he was full of *fucking* shit! *(Laughter.)* I'm *sure* I said that. It's pretty funny because Gary quoted me all the way up to . . . he didn't quote me on that one, you know. Whatever. I mean, I talk a lot and I cuss a lot, but it's hard to figure — even out of context — how he would have gotten that. Gary decided to try and get me in trouble, so that's okay.

JIM: (Laughter.) *Well, what is the deal? Can —*

TODD: No. As soon as I saw that — it was like, "Ah, Dave!" Either I didn't express myself correctly or he misinterpreted — either way, I didn't go and correct him. What I meant to say, or what I *thought* I said, was that anybody at Image, whatever they *create*, whatever they *do*, they *own*. If they decide to leave they can take every and anything *with* them. If they've created the Baxter Building, they can pull it right out of the Image Universe and we're going to have to go, "Uh oh, we've got a hole in the middle of Manhattan." They can take everything with them *except* the "i" logo.

JIM: *A-ha! Okay.*

TODD: It's a minor point, but it was a *big* minor point. *(Laughter.)* Gary phoned me as soon as that letter came out. That issue came out and the phone rang and Gary was like, "I thought you told me that you couldn't take the 'i' with you!" I apologize, Gary. Fuck it.

JIM: *So, you're saying if you wanted to quit Image, or say you got disgusted with Image and you took all their top artists and you left* (laughter) *you couldn't call it Image; you'd have to come up with another name?*

TODD: Yeah. But I could take SPAWN and all the background; I could take

This page - SPAWN as intrepreted by rising artist Randy Queen (he also had a full-page pin-up in SPAWN No. 7), opposite: for comparison, McFarlane's SPAWN.

"My goal is to create characters that become bigger than me."

everything I've created. I couldn't call it Image, though, because otherwise we'd have 20 Images after awhile

JIM: *What about the guest writers? Who owns their stuff? Are they working work-for-hire? What's the deal?*

TODD: Well, I haven't made them sign contracts or anything, so I guess they could . . .

JIM: *Oops. Todd?*

TODD: . . .

JIM: *You're breaking up a little bit.*

TODD: It's not me. It's at your end.

JIM: *It's the speaker phone. You're going in and out a little bit. But we'll keep going and let the poor transcriber worry about it*

TODD: Essentially, the way that I'm working is something like this: I divide the money up between the guy who writes, pencils, inks it, and the guy who created it, you know what I mean. And the guy who created it gets basically the least amount of it. So, if somebody decides to do an issue of SPAWN then I get a little piece just because of advertising, and I laid the groundwork, and I did the first twelve issues. I got . . .

JIM: *There you go again*

TODD: . . . but other than that, you know, this isn't about money, it's about keeping the legend going

JIM: *What's in store in the future for SPAWN? Isn't there a big project you're going to be doing and taking off a few issues?*

TODD: I haven't, I'm, mmm — it depends on how things go. Originally my game plan was to do, like, as close to twelve issues a year as possible But that never meant that they'd all be SPAWN, okay. SPAWN is still my ace up my sleeve, but if I decide I want to go do a VIOLATOR mini-series I'll just take a couple of months off SPAWN — but *I'll* be producing *work!* In other words, in April and May instead of getting two issues of SPAWN you get two issues of something else, so essentially you'll still get twelve issues of **McFarlane**, it just might not be twelve issues of SPAWN by **McFarlane.**

So, right now, I've got **Alan Moore** lined up to write a three-issue VIOLATOR mini-series, then it's just a matter of deciding whether I'm gonna go and do the artwork on that, and if I do that then **Bart Sears** is going to take over SPAWN. Instead of shutting down SPAWN . . . And if I decide that I want to stick on SPAWN then Bart will probably do the mini-series with Alan.

JIM: *Well, why would you . . . why* not *shut down SPAWN?*

TODD: Why not shut down SPAWN? I could. I probably would if I hadn't found people that I think can carry it on and not disrupt the flow of it. I've got Bart and I've got Grant, and I think the two of those guys doing a weird story for a couple of months isn't really going to affect the sales . . .

JIM: *There you go again.* (Hits phone repeatedly.) *Todd? Hold on.*

TODD: I don't think it's going to hurt the sales, or the legend of it or something like that. So I'm *hoping* by the time I end up doing THE VIOLATOR if I decide to take off the kids are going to want to still see SPAWN, you know what I mean. My goal in breaking away isn't to be **"Famous Amos" Todd McFarlane,** I had enough of that on SPIDER-MAN. My goal is to create characters that become bigger than me. So, if I can get to the point where if I leave SPAWN for a couple of months and the book still does good, then that means they're buying it for *more* than just because **Todd McFarlane's** on it. They actually like the character. That's, in my point of view, what this whole game is all about right now; trying to come up with characters that sustain readers — then maybe I won't have to draw them for the rest of my life. *(Laughter.)*

JIM: *Was that always the game plan?*

TODD: Well, I mean, we each have our own game plan, but *part* of the game plan was creating the next Superman, Batman, Mickey Mouse, you know. But *we'd* own it! Some of those guys have been around for 50 years, have long legs blah blah blah blah, but the guys who actually created those books aren't prospering, you know. If I create the next Mickey Mouse I'm going to profit, not no fucking

JIM: *There you go again. Hold on.*

"For the first time in 50 years Warner Bros.

has allowed Batman to go outside DC's door."

Sorry about this. I don't know why my phone's acting up. (Hits phone repeatedly.) *I'll pound it into submission! Todd?*

TODD: Hello, Dad! *(Laughter.)*

JIM: *Hey, Todd. How is the whole break from Malibu? Now in addition to writer, creator, penciller, inker, et cetera, you're also the publisher, right?*

TODD: Not me personally; but Image Comics, yes.

JIM: *Well, technically, isn't that you?*

TODD: I guess so, yeah, in a roundabout way. I'm *part* of it.

JIM: *Well, I mean, you're going to be publishing some issues of SPAWN that you're not doing. In a sense you've become the editor-publisher.*

TODD: You betcha!

JIM: *Owner.* (Laughter.)

TODD: You betcha!

JIM: *How is the transition?*

TODD: You know how I edit! *(Laughter.)* I edit just like my good pal **Jim Salicrup.** I edit with *confidence* in my creative crew.

JIM: *Well, then you won't have a long career, let me tell you.*

TODD: What do you mean? You were there for a long time. *(Laughter.)*

JIM: *Well, tell me, what's going on now that you're on your own?*

TODD: Now that I'm on my own there isn't a day that I don't thank my lucky stars. Things are *happening!* We've got deals upon deals, we've got freedom, we've got the most *fun* in the business! We are just having a big party over here. I've got total control over it, I'm working with some of the best guys in the business, we're just rockin' and rollin'! I just put to bed another big comic book deal that'll be announced here in about a week, so we're *killin'* 'em!

JIM: *You can tell us. We won't tell anyone. This won't come out in a week.*

TODD: I know, but if I tell you — I mean, it can't get out period.

JIM: *Just tell us and it'll come out after it comes out anyway.*

TODD: There's no loose lips in that office of yours?

JIM: *Nope.*

TODD: I just put together a BATMAN AND SPAWN team-up. The better part of it is the issue that I do, which doesn't tie into their issue . . . Here's what the deal is: They get Spawn for one issue and they keep all of it; I get Batman for one issue and I keep all of it. For the first time in 50 years Warner Bros. has allowed Batman to go outside DC's door and they don't get a penny for it.

JIM: *Well, I can think of a card company that has the rights on the Batman cards.*

TODD: That's the thing that I think is going to get complicated, is how do we handle the merchandise, how do we handle the rights of each character . . .

JIM: *Todd? Hold on.* (Hits phone.)

TODD: I'm here

JIM: *Well, that's exciting. How did that come about?*

TODD: It came about . . Since the Image group is a competitive lot, Rob and Jim are doing their crossover with Valiant, well the big Toddy couldn't stand still and just let them steal all the thunder now! No way! But on the other hand I don't want to step on their toes, so basically they'll do their crossover and just when that's starting to fade from memory *Kaboomo!* Another big crossover with the name Image on it. So, we're going to be in the public eye here for the whole summer.

JIM: *Okay!*

"In SHADOWHAWK II #2, we take off the mask."

JIM VALENTINO

Jim Valentino has had a long and diverse career in comics, beginning with small press comics, moving from the underground to the alternative comics scene. He then jumped to Marvel, and last year broke off to co-found Image Comics. With such a wealth of experience at hand in the mechanics of the industry, Jim is utilizing this knowledge and his creative assets to craft the next wave of titles from Image. In a candid interview, he reveals the world of his character Shadowhawk, his part in Image's 1963 project, and insights into the workings of the comics company that everyone's talking about . . .

Featuring Erik Larsen's SAVAGE DRAGON — Jim's pencils for SHADOWHAWK #4. Erik will later do the inks.

MARK LUCAS: *Who or what is Shadowhawk?*

JIM VALENTINO: I can't tell you who (heh heh). As for what, Shadowhawk is a vigilante who has decided that, for whatever reason, the court system doesn't work. We get the impression from the things Shadowhawk has said that he — or she — has been involved in some way in the system, although we're still unclear as to why. We've gotten some hints about things that have happened to him, like he's probably been a victim of a violent crime at one point or another. We get the idea that this is someone who has taken the idea of revenge/vigilantism and acted upon it. Whether he is male or female is up for debate. But, this will be the subject for the second finite series.

MARK: *Part of the fun of SHADOWHAWK is that the readers can guess along who he is. Has anyone come close yet?*

JIM: Oh, sure. Yeah. There's one guy who wrote a 3-4 page letter. He got it all. He guessed everything on the head. There are readers who have figured it out.

MARK: *Do you think part of the fun of the series is its interactive nature?*

JIM: I think so. That's what's made it interesting for me. I get that from the letters columns, the guesses we've received. I think my favorite one so far is the guy who said Shadowhawk was the landlord from THREE'S COMPANY.

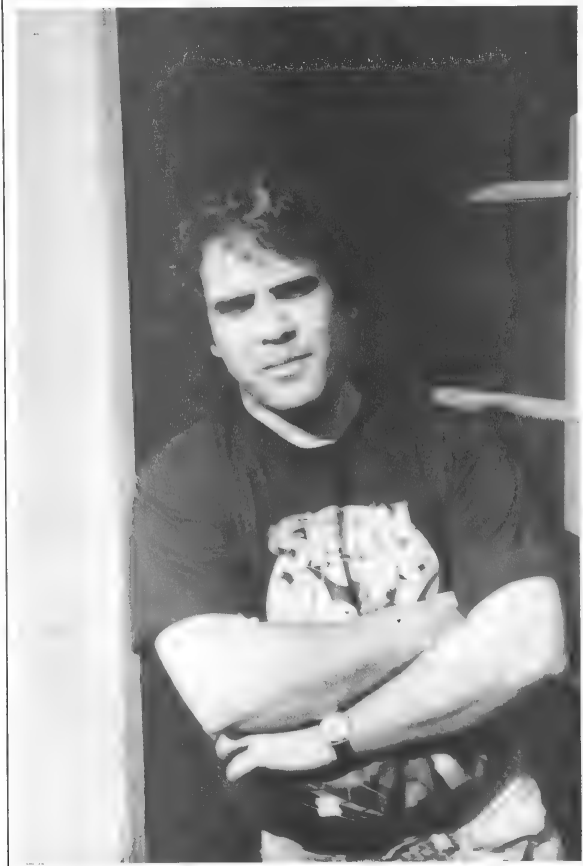
MARK: *Mr. Roper?*

JIM: Yeah, Mr. Roper. His theory was, have you ever seen the two of them in the same place? It's that kind of stuff that's real fun. It's been fun to do it. In SHADOWHAWK II #2, we're going to take off the mask as part of the storyline.

MARK: *Will this be a finite series?*

JIM: SHADOWHAWK II will be a

SHADOWHAWK ©1993 Jim Valentino / THE SAVAGE DRAGON ©1993 Erik Larsen



"The NORMALMAN special with Bob Burden will

three-issue finite series. One of the underlying themes we're going to do is that there's going to be a copycat killer who's going to be striking around the city. At present, we're calling him "Hawkshadow." Shadowhawk's going to confront him. It's going to be a pretty dramatic moment. When Shadowhawk confronts him, he's going to take off the mask. So, everyone will find out if their guesses have been correct.

MARK: *How did Shadowhawk come about? Was this character for your first series at Image?*

JIM: The character had been around in my head for awhile. The idea was actually one that I had for Archie Comics' The Fox. Awhile back, Archie decided they were going to bring their characters back as darker and grittier. I think **Kelley Jones** had done The Hangman. **Mike Barr** had done a character. I thought about The Fox. The Fox has always been a third-rate Batman. So, I started thinking about Batman. What makes Batman work for me? The things that didn't make him work for me were the souped-up car racing down the streets, the various batgadgets, the kid sidekick didn't work for me. The idea that he had this working relationship with the police just didn't work for me. If this character is supposed to be the scourge of the night, if he's supposed to bring fear into the hearts of criminals, then it would seem to me that most citizens would not know he was around, that he wouldn't make his presence known. You wouldn't see him until it was too late. If you saw him, he was after you. And, you had a reason to be scared. This guy would take you out. Also, the idea that Batman would just do this ballet with guys as obviously dangerous as The Joker or Two-Face or guys like these maniacs just didn't make sense to me either. It was that kind of formula, saying, "This doesn't work; what works?" that eventually became Shadowhawk.

MARK: *You use a second-person narrative style for the character. How did that come about?*

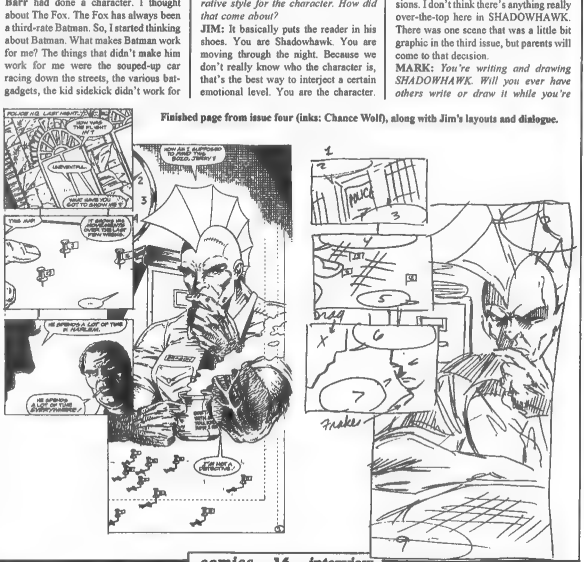
JIM: It basically puts the reader in his shoes. You are Shadowhawk. You are moving through the night. Because we don't really know who the character is, that's the best way to interject a certain emotional level. You are the character. You feel the wind on your face. You feel the bone break under your knuckle. It's the interactive sense of the book, trying to get the reader to interact emotionally with the character, because you can't really act on an intellectual level, not knowing who he is.

MARK: *There's been some discussion about the levels of violence in this series. How do you feel that kids are reading this?*

JIM: Well, I'm the father of a 9-year-old. I don't think it's anything they're not watching in TERMINATOR 2. I think it's up to each individual parent to decide what their child should or should not read. I think that's something nobody else has the right to decide except those parents. The stuff is out there. I think conscientious parents who know what their children are reading will make those decisions. I don't think there's anything really over-the-top here in SHADOWHAWK. There was one scene that was a little bit graphic in the third issue, but parents will come to that decision.

MARK: *You're writing and drawing SHADOWHAWK. Will you ever have others write or draw it while you're*

Finished page from issue four (inks: Chance Wolf), along with Jim's layouts and dialogue.


POLICE H.Q. LAST NIGHT...
HOW'D IT GO, CHIEF?
THEY'RE RIGHT!
UNDENIABLE...
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SHOW US?
THIS AIR
IT SHOWS HIS FACE, BUT NOT OVER THE LEAST FISH WRINKLE.
HE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME IN NORMLEAK.
HE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME EVERYWHERE!
HOW DID IT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN, BOSS...THERE?
BREAKS!
FOR HALF A MILLENNIUM!
Drag
Fake

have Megaton Man and Mr. Spook of Beanworld."

doing other projects?

JIM: Yes and no. SHADOWHAWK is going to be a series of finite series. Currently, there are five of them planned. In each one of them, we're going to go a bit deeper into Shadowhawk. The first is basically an introduction. In the second, we're going to reveal who Shadowhawk is. In the third, we're going to look a bit at his/her personal madness. In the fourth, we're going to explore his origin. The fifth one, depending on what happens . . . I'm thinking about killing him. Of course, in a sixth, we'll resurrect him as four different people. And this summer, I'll be starting a second book, a monthly book. That one's called IMAGES OF SHADOWHAWK. This one will be set up a lot like the LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT series. It'll be set up in three-issue story arcs. Each story arc will be by a different creator or different creative team. The first three are going to be by **Alan Grant** and **Keith Giffen**, the people who gave us Lobo. So, it's going to be Shadowhawk over-the-top. What I'm looking for are very over-the-top, out-on-the edge kinds of approaches to the character. That's where the "yes and no" comes in. The reason I'm doing finite series with Shadowhawk are two reasons. First, I think that finite series and story arcs give you the chance to tell a better story than an open-ended series would. I also want to do other projects, other things besides Shadowhawk. I have a group called The Others. I have a story I want to write that another artist is actually going to be painting. It's called RAYN. I'm going to be doing a NORMALMAN NINTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL with **Bob Burden.** It's going to be Normalman, Megaton Man, The Flaming Carrot, and Mr. Spook of Beanworld. The four of us have more-or-less co-plotted about ten stories which Bob Burden is trying to write into one.

MARK: *He's the best person for that.*

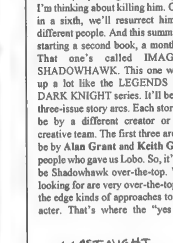
JIM: He's incredible. **Don Simpson** will be doing most of the pencilling with everyone doing the inks. We have guest stars from some of the best people of the 1980s independent comics movement, like **Dave Sim.** He's agreed to allow Cerebus to appear. We have Omaha, the Cat Dancer. We have Panda Khan, Neil the Horse, Wolverine McAllistair from JOURNEY, Zot, and on and on and on. Groo's also going to be a part of it. It's like old home week for me. It's a joy to be able to do this, and Image has allowed me to do that. I'm also going to be editing a few things. I'm the sponsor/editor of the 1963 series that **Alan Moore, Steve Bissette** and **Rick Veitch** are doing with **Dave Gibbons, John Totleben, Chester Brown** and myself, with **Don Simpson** acting as all-back-up. I'm very, very much behind this series. I had a good conversation this morning with Alan about where we could take it from here and stuff. I'm very, very excited about this. What they're doing is that, if you take the notion that comics have gone so far over-the-edge one way (which I guess SHADOWHAWK would be a prominent example thereof), then the notion herein is that the next step forward is one step back. To return to this thing of innocence. And, with Alan, it's always working on two or three different levels depending on how deeply you want to go into it. There are those who will see it as straight-ahead, old-fashioned superhero stories; there are others who will see it on a more satirical level, others who will see it on a more nostalgic bent, and there are others who will go even deeper than that. It's got all those various levels we're used to with **Alan Moore.** And, since he's working with these people whom he has done such wonderful work with in the past, people who were his fans will just go crazy with this stuff. I think we're going to get more new fans for him, especially with his writing SPAWN #9 and his writing the three-issue VIOLATOR series for **Todd McFarlane.** We're hoping it all goes over well. It's very, very neat.

MARK: *And, we see so little of their work.*

JIM: That's part of it. They're really excited about this project. 1963 is a finite series. Each issue has a different title. The first is MYSTERY, INC., which is a cosmic-powered quartet. The second one is NO ONE ESCAPES THE FURY, which was described to me by Alan as a Ditko roofrunner. There's TALES OF THE UNCANNY, which is a split book like TALES TO ASTONISH or TALES OF SUSPENSE. Half is "The USA," who is the ultimate secret agent, and the other half is "The Hypernaut" ("Beyond Humanity lies . . . The Hypernaut!"). Number four is TALES FROM THE BEYOND with the unbelievable "N-Man," "N" for nuclear, and "Johnny Beyond." Johnny Beyond is the one I'm going to be pencilling. This was described to me as, "Imagine Dr. Strange if he was Jack Kerouac." Then, we have ILORACE, THE LORD OF LIGHT. And, the final one is called THE TOMORROW SYNDICATE. The Tomorrow Syndicate is more-or-less our JLA or Avengers. The whole thing will culminate in an 80-page giant annual which will cross-over with the Image Universe Everything's going to connect one way or another. The concept of the thing is a thing called the Maybe Machine, which moves people through time in 30-year gaps but through parallel dimensions. The way it works is, starting in 1963, they can jump back to 1933, the year before Superman was created, or up to 1993. Consider the Johnny Beyond story. This woman is walking down the street. First, she's wearing 1993 fashions — lots of color, odd fabrics — that in 1963 just didn't exist. Johnny Beyond takes her to a coffee shop where she pulls out a cellular phone to call her office.

MARK: *That would look unusual.*

JIM: Right! Something as commonplace as a cellular phone! We'll notice the watch she's wearing. It could be one of those computer watches. It's all these little things. Imagine a villain who goes to 1993 from 1963, and brings an Uzi back with him It's these science-fiction elements in the 1963 world where, in 1993, they're commonplace. It goes up to 2023, another 30-year jump, which is where the series WILDSTAR is taking place. That's by **Jerry Ordway** and **Al Gordon.** I'm


1. LAST NIGHT...
2. HOW WAS THE FLIGHT IN, [illegible]?
3. UNEVENTFUL. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SHOW ME?
WE'VE DONE UP THIS MAP
4. THIS MAP SHOWS HIS MOVEMENTS OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS.
5. HMMM...
6. HE SEEMS TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN HARLEM.
7. HE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME EVERYWHERE.
8. SO JUST HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND HIM, JERRY? THIS BOZO,
9. I'M NOT THE "WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE," [illegible]
9. I'M NOT A DETECTIVE.

"I can produce a monthly with no problem at all."

not sure exactly how we're going to work them in. There're just all these wild connections which seem to be working out wonderfully. It's another reason why I'm not doing SHADOWHAWK as a monthly series. I'm simply having too much fun. Image is a way to facilitate all of these things, because we pretty much have (within reason) to create carte blanche various new series and try to figure out new ways to . . . have fun. I'm just trying to do what I've always tried to do my whole career, have a good time. And, I am having a delightful one.

MARK: *One of the biggest criticisms of Image is that their books are delayed. With you involved in all of these projects, do you see problems with that?*

JIM: I can't speak for anyone else, obviously, although I think it happened to all of us. What happened to me: I can produce a monthly book with no problem at all. I'm pretty darn fast at the drawing board. I've seen **Jim Lee** at the drawing board and he's faster than I am. He can do three pages comfortably in a day. I've seen **Rob Liefeld** draw. He's incredibly fast. So's **Todd McFarlane.** And **Erik Larsen.** I've never seen **Whilce Portacio** draw, so I don't know exactly if he's fast or not. But, I think we're all capable of producing a monthly book. The things we weren't prepared for were: Number one was that Image hit like an atomic bomb. When it hit, it hit like an atomic bomb, not only in the direct sales market, not just in the comic-book market, but all over We were interviewed for television. We were in newspapers. We were in magazines. We had tons and tons of people calling us up, wanting to talk to us. It's very hard to say no to some of these people. It wasn't just personal gain and personal fulfillment, although I would be lying if I said personally it wasn't. But, a lot of it was that hopefully, we could get out there and make some noise about the comic-book industry, that it's here, it's active, it's viable, and there's some good stuff out here That was part one. Number two was that we weren't working for a company that had everything wired. We went from a company that had hundreds of people employed as bookkeepers, promotional consultants, promotional managers, people who did copy for the solicitations, and on down the line. They had an entire office set up. All of a sudden, we became those offices. I don't think any of us realized how overwhelming that would be, how much time that would take, and how difficult a job that was to facilitate. I think *there's* where we were losing time. What I found out was that I was trying to do three full-time jobs at once. I just couldn't keep up with it By the end of last summer, I almost collapsed from exhaustion. I was so tired from everything I had to do. And, I still wasn't getting anything done. I was just trying to do too many things, and the burden was just too difficult. I don't honestly think any of us really . . . I don't think it's anything anyone thinks about until you're actually faced with it. And it was very immediate. Don't forget, we were very much in the public eye. I had this talk with **David Quinn** a couple of weeks ago. Unlike most companies that start out very small — so all their mistakes no one notices — every single mistake, every single misstep we took became a matter of public record. We were under this amazing microscope. It was very difficult in a lot of ways. This isn't to create a sob story, but I think it goes a long way to explaining. It's not like we all took a vacation in Hawaii. It's just that we had so many other jobs to be faced with. It's not easy.

MARK: *Now that Image has broken off from Malibu and are totally off on their own, how does this change things?*

JIM: It doesn't, really. You have to

Pencilled page from the second issue of 1963, THE FURY.

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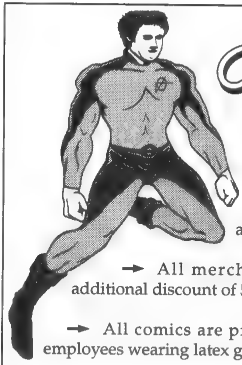

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"The way I see it, I'm back home, back where I belong."

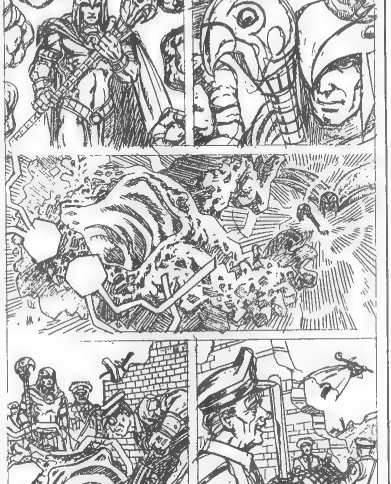
understand . . . a nasty rumor I keep hearing is that Image is splitting up. Everybody's going their own way. Proof positive is that you have Homage with **Jim Lee** and **Mark Silvestri.** You have Extreme with **Rob Liefeld.** You have **Todd McFarlane.** You have **Jim Valentino** doing Shadowline. They see us all as being separate entities. Well, when we first started out, we announced that we were all going to be separate entities who came together under a banner, an umbrella. The shared banner/umbrella is Image. We all have separate companies. It's still the same way. As Image, being its own publishing company, standing solo, was inevitable right from the start. It was inevitable from the very first meeting. It was the next logical step to take. I don't think it's going to change a whole lot, except that everyone in the group is taking the idea of producing books in a more timely fashion very, very seriously. I had a book I was going to be putting out, THE OTHERS, which I'm not putting out until I have all three issues in hand. That's when I'll solicit it.

MARK: *When do you foresee that?*

JIM: We're starting work on it right now (February). I'd hope to have it out on the stands by late summer/early fall. I am not going to rush the project. I have a new artist on the project, **Isaac Cordova,** who has a very nice, interesting, **Neal Adams**-ish style to his work. We're looking for an inker now for him. **Chance Wolf** was supposed to do the series but decided he'd rather ink the pencils, so we'll keep him on SHADOWHAWK, which is fine since I really like what he does to my pencils. We've a new penciller. I don't want to rush him. I want him to do the best work of his ability. I don't want to prematurely announce a book that's not quite ready to go out. I think it's been done too often, especially with Image. It's time to retrench a little bit and rethink that whole aspect.

MARK: *Have you accomplished what you originally set out to do with Image?*

JIM: I think if you ask the other cofounders, everyone might have a different agenda of what they started out to do. Everybody had something a little bit different. For me, my idea was to empower creators. It was to state that you could take a step away, that you could do stuff on your own. I come from the independent comics movement to begin with. I came out of small-press comics, to a brief tenure in the underground, to alternative comics, then to mainstream comics, and now I'm back to alternative comics. Basically, the way I see it, I'm back home, back where I belong. The way I see it, my idea was to make it so that artists could better profit from their work so they wouldn't be forced into a situation of bad working conditions, of people telling them they were unimportant to projects they created. I think that, in that aspect, we have. All the companies that have responded to Image. They have given better deals to their artists and creators, both financially and in their working conditions. I think that's a positive step. I think Image and Valiant (to a certain degree) have given writers, artists and letterers more outlets. They don't just have one or two places they can go to. If you become, for whatever reason, unacceptable in one place, you can go to another place now. I think that's a positive step for the industry, positive movement for the industry in the way the industry takes care of those who do the creating for it. In those instances, yes, I believe we have. Has it gone far enough? I don't know. When you say you've accomplished your goals, then it's time to throw up your hands and say, "Okay, time to go." I don't know if we're there yet. I think that better working conditions and more equitable pay, and hopefully creative people being treated better, like human beings as opposed to cattle, is a far better way to go about things. And I think Image has contributed to that greatly.



Another from Jim's (as editor and sponsor) 1963: "Horace, the Lord of Light."

"Just a group of friends getting together to form a company."

ROB LIEFELD

Not much can be said that hasn't already been stated concerning Rob Liefeld and the effect that Image Comics has had on the industry. In one year's time Image Comics has grown from the dream of seven original co-founders to that of the number two ranking comics company in the industry today. Overnight Rob Liefeld and company have been propelled into celebrity status and are swamped by fans at conventions and store signings. Rob took time from his hectic schedule to talk about the success of Image and the plans for the future including their upcoming Valiant/Image crossover.

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *Were you surprised by the success of Image?*

ROB LIEFELD: Absolutely! I was blown away. We were all blown away. We were just a group of friends getting together to form a comic company to suit our needs and creative desires. We never thought we would hit the #2 company spot twice. It just happened again for the month of March.

I've always wanted to create my own characters and I couldn't see myself working for Marvel the rest of my life, given the way the company was structured.

I basically sat down and put on paper the minimum amount of sales I would need to make a living, to keep the clothes on my back and a roof over my head.

CHARLES: *What surprised me is the amount of exposure you've created for yourself and for Image. You've been on a Levi 501 Jeans commercial, the DENNIS MILLER SHOW, and most recently I saw you on a Saturday morning news for kids show.*

ROB: It's amazing, isn't it? I have to tell you, I'm most excited over the fact that I was a question on Double Jeopardy the other night. (Laughter.) Nothing in my entire career has excited me more than the

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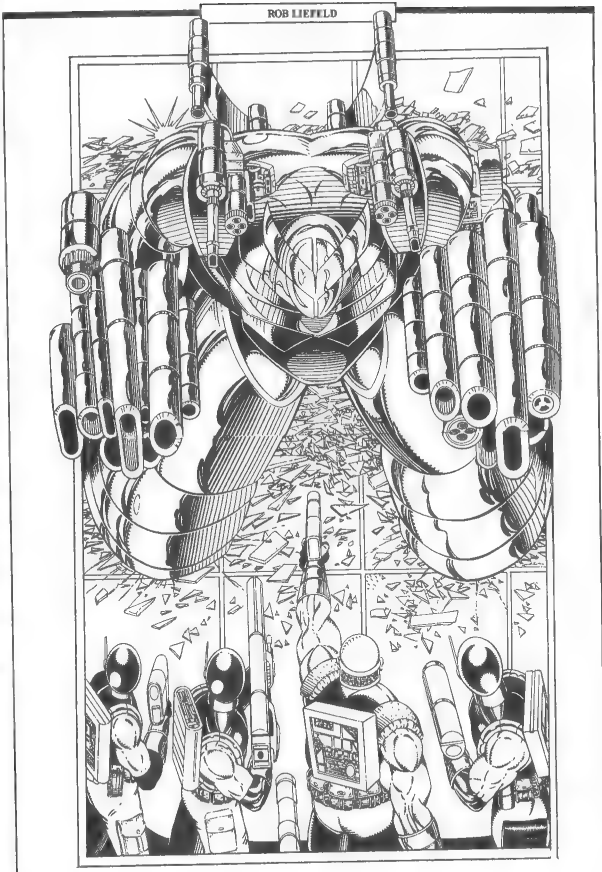
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"Image has made comics high profile and that's good."

fact that I was a question on JEOPARDY. It was awesome

CHARLES: *How did the Levi ad come about?*

ROB: I've always loved that ad. They had a guy on that talked backwards. I did that commercial because I knew that if I could get comics on television it would give exposure for comics 24 hours a day. Those spots were on MTV and on key times during the day. It was a great way to show that comics have grown up. It was funny because there wasn't one other cartoonist that contacted them to do the commercial. The ads were everywhere: if you did something unusual give us a call. I think comics fit the bill.

I think of myself as a comics crusader. Anything that helps comic books in general get out in front of the public eye, I'm all for it.

CHARLES: *How do you feel Image has specifically helped the comics industry?*

ROB: Image has a high profile. I feel that the press and the media are very powerful. There's nothing the press can't do. They can make you vote for a particular candidate or they can bring a particular subject to the limelight. I think Image has made comics high profile and that's good for the industry. When I was a kid, comics were neither as accessible nor as popular as they are now. I'm not just talking Image Comics, I'm talking the entire comics industry.

People frown on the collectibility aspect of comics and the bagged, trading card frenzy we've seen lately. There's good and bad with that. The collectors' market has given comics more exposure and that's good.

But getting back to what Image has done for comics, we've said goodbye to the corporate comic by forming our own label. I was reading about this year's Oscars and how this year is the year for the independent and the studios have been left out in the cold as far as nominations. I see that happening more in mainstream comics as well, whether it be Image, Valiant, or Dark Horse.

CHARLES: *Is there the fear that — now that you've become so successful, you might become more like Marvel in the way you operate?*

ROB: I think that's something that goes through all of our heads. I think we all have our own definitions of what would make us like Marvel. For instance, if we go public with a stock offering, are we like Marvel? If we produce 100 copies a month, are we like Marvel? It's all in the definition. My definition of a corporation is that they squeeze you for as much as they can. I'm proud to say that with every deal I've struck on behalf of Image, be it work-for-hire or trying to get a creator to do their own title, I've paid them sometimes 30 times the going rate. We're doing this for the creators.

Work-for-hire is not a bad thing when you're happy with the deal. I do trading cards on a work for hire basis. It is bad when you don't get a good deal because the editor tells you "It's the going rate" or else "You haven't paid your dues." Everyone has a sense of worth about themselves and we try to meet that. At times we exceed it! That separates us from the Big Two immediately.

CHARLES: *How did YOUNGBLOOD become the first title for Image?*

ROB: I was bound and determined to do it even if I had to do it on my own. I was so tired of the Marvel stuff. I was working on X-FORCE and it was getting too dark and grim. The X-books are all like that because now the mutants are all hated and hunted. I was able to plot X-FORCE, but when it came down to scripting, well, you'd be amazed how the scripting can change the direction of the original plot. In terms of X-FORCE I had a definite idea as far as the way I was heading with the book and I felt some of the stuff the characters were saying was crazy.

The books I enjoyed as a kid were FANTASTIC FOUR and THOR, and I wanted to do something like that. The premise with YOUNGBLOOD was simple, what if there was an Avengers or Justice League-like group but they existed in the real world? Issue #3 and #0 touched on the public aspect of the group. For the most part I conceded to the pressure of sales on the mini-series. I ended up turning the book into a much more hard-hitting, costumed superhero action book than I had intended. The best mail we received was on issue #3 where we dwelt on the concept of the superhero in the real world. I'm fortunate that good friend **Todd McFarlane** integrated Youngblood into the SPAWN continuity. We have a crossover coming up with a "Who killed Spawn" storyline. The nice thing is that YOUNGBLOOD can evolve into so many different directions.

CHARLES: *How did it feel at the time to have YOUNGBLOOD top all-time sales figures for an independent? Did you anticipate the sales?*

ROB: Not at all! I thought, look, if I'm getting a dime for every Marvel comic I do and I won't sell as well because YOUNGBLOOD isn't Marvel, well maybe I can make the same money because I'm getting a bigger cut. I was looking to hopefully match my Marvel wages. I figured I could do that with relatively low sales figures. The book initially was ordered at 350,000, then 800,000, and then eventually 1,000,000 copies right before it went to print. It was scary. There was a lot of notoriety with the book because it was the first book we were producing and it sold a million copies. I've always wanted to do a split book and give the kids two covers. I would have loved to have had two **John**

"There's brand loyalty to a company or char-

Byrne or **George Perez** covers when I was buying their books I wanted to give them more story and every YOUNGBLOOD book has been 30 to 40 pages. That was a part of the lateness and I've learned that the kids would rather have a 20-page story each month rather than wait three months for a 40-page story.

I've learned a lot over the past year. Maybe the most important is out of sight, out of mind. It doesn't matter if you're talking comics, acting or the music business. One of the things we at Image have to improve upon is getting our product out on time.

CHARLES: *I wanted to ask you about that and how you would answer your critics. With the exception of SPAWN, Image titles haven't shipped very reliably.*

ROB: To be honest, Todd to me is setting the example of how to do a book right at Image. Todd has stuck to his guns and devised a character and game plan that allows him to get it out every six weeks. The critics and the fans all love SPAWN and I love SPAWN. I respect Todd because he works his butt off to produce. We're working on developing a family of books and I've hired an editor and trafficker who can help get these books out so I can concentrate on producing the books.

Todd told me he never goes over 22 pages per book. I'm taking a hard look at why I missed my deadline so I can correct it.

CHARLES: *Now that you have a year under your belt, would you have done anything differently in forming Image?*

ROB: Sure, I think we would have taken it a lot slower. We had sort of a game plan, but not really.

CHARLES: *Was that because things got out of hand because of the high sales?*

ROB: Not really; that's just an excuse. I have to be honest with you; I hate making excuses and I've had to make too many excuses this past year. I just want to get on time and not make any excuses.

I'm going to tell you, and I'm not going to mention names. There were a few guys that were hesitant about forming Image. It was a scary thing. I was willing to bet that if **Frank Miller**, **George Perez**, and **Walt Simonson**, my idols as a kid, had formed their own company, I would have followed them anywhere. There's a brand loyalty to a company or character, but there's also a loyalty to the talent. Some of the people were scared and wanted to put the formation off for a year. Basically, we would have just been starting up now. I think that would have been a mistake, and

Rob inks the pencils of Jack "King" Kirby for a new Image title, PHANTOM FORCE (created by Kirby).

I'm glad we did what we did when we did it. I do wish that I hadn't gone directly from doing X-FORCE to doing YOUNGBLOOD without taking a break. I think the time we did it was crucial. I think it would have been harder to start out now and to stand out with so many companies putting out so many products

CHARLES: *You're currently involved with YOUNGBLOOD, SUPREME, and BRIGADE.*

ROB: Right now YOUNGBLOOD's done. I'm doing three 10-page installments, writing and drawing, for YOUNGBLOOD STRIKEFILE. I'm doing a YOUNGBLOOD/VALIANT crossover book and am finishing up my part of the DARKER IMAGE material. After that I have to decide if I want to do a YOUNGBLOOD book.

CHARLES: *That leads to my next question, which is, do you plan to focus on YOUNGBLOOD projects or something entirely different?*

ROB: Right now I want to do something with YOUNGBLOOD, I just don't know what yet. Right now I'm focussing on getting the STRIKEFILE material out on time.

I'm also looking forward to doing a kick-butt job on the Valiant crossover because the fans of both companies are looking forward to the crossover.

CHARLES: *Do you see yourself as an artist first, or a writer/artist?*

ROB: Creator/artist. I'm not opposed to people scripting over my work.

CHARLES: *We've touched briefly on the Image/Valiant crossover. I believe the crossover is known as DEATHMATE. What is your involvement in the crossover?*

ROB: I'm doing 10 pages of the prelude book and **Jim Lee** is doing another 10 pages. **Bob Layton** wrote the story that basically involves a rift in the continuity of both universes. As a result the characters will share a sort of alternate universe. Out of the crossover is a prologue and an epilogue book with four books in be-

acter, but there's also a loyalty to the talent."

tween. Two of the books will be from Image and two from Valiant. My book is basically a YOUNGBLOOD/BLOODSHOT book. I'm writing and drawing the book and it will be 48 pages. Because of the new universe that both companies are sharing it gives us the opportunity to do some different things. Jim Lee's Void character from WILDC.A.T.S and SOLAR from Valiant will play major roles in the crossover. It has been fun working on it.

CHARLES: *As Image grows, do you see yourself evolving into a more "work for hire" environment?*

ROB: No, not really. People that come on board are usually asked to do some limited work for awhile to see if they like it and then we offer them something more substantial. Jae Lee is a good example. We offered him his own book and he said he wasn't quite ready yet. I think there are a lot of new guys that we're giving a break. We call the place the Extreme Dorm because there's, like, 15 people in here and I put some up in my own home, a few others in an apartment. It's an environment where they can all learn together. We call these young guys the "rookies" because they want to learn and evolve before calling this a career. I think we offer a great opportunity for new talent. On the other hand, guys like Frank Miller and John Byrne have both been told they can do whatever they want, whenever they want.

CHARLES: *I see a trend of newer but established artists coming to Image and then the established crop of writers and artists. What about someone who wants to break into the industry, but might not have any credits to speak of?*

ROB: There's room for them here as well. I have colorists learning the trade that have never colored before, new inkers breaking in. We have a host of new inkers that we've found both through the convention circuit and through mail submissions. These guys are talented and young. I'm talking 18, 19 years old. I'm just thrilled that I have the opportunity to work with them and that they're not all going to Marvel or DC.

CHARLES: *A lot of the guys are relatively young and appear to be overnight sensations; when, in reality, it doesn't happen that way.*

ROB: Right, I've been in the business for 5½ years now.

CHARLES: *What we've seen is a lot of talent coming from Marvel or DC moving over to Image. What about the new guys you're training? What if they want to go to Marvel or DC?*

Co-stars of Rob's in the Levi's 501 Jeans commercial (X-Force).

ROB: They can go. They can work wherever they want to.

CHARLES: *Sure, that's your side. What I'm getting at is how do you think Marvel or DC would feel about hiring someone from Image?*

ROB: First of all, I can't speak for Marvel or DC. Look, to be honest with you, the idea is to make it that to go work at Marvel would be a step down. What we've done in a year is that if you work here and want to go work at Marvel, fine, but you won't get the exposure, won't get paid the money, and won't have the fun that you have here. That's the bottom line.

CHARLES: *Why all the Image books in a mini-series format?*

ROB: First of all, everything this year will be a regular series. The mini-series concept was a way to test the water to see what would sell. Now that the fans want more and more, we'll be giving them that. When YOUNGBLOOD starts up as a regular series it won't be with a new #1

"I hope yea[illegible] now we have comic creators

SUPREME (art: Brian Murray) is among Image's most popular books, receiving hundreds of fan letters each week — another creation of Liefeld's.

issue, but rather with issue #5. Rather than huckstering everyone with a new #1, we'll just pick up the series only a year later. Now the team will be split up so one of the books will be a #1.

CHARLES: *How do you feel about the fact that a lot of the Image books are feeding the collector mentality, rather than going into the hands of true readers?*

ROB: That ticks me off. I want everyone to read the book. I don't want kids to buy it and stuff it in a bag without reading it. It's funny, retailers are starting to tell me that kids are reading YOUNGBLOOD more and bagging the books with the gimmick covers.

The kids are reading the books because we get hundreds of letters a week for YOUNGBLOOD and SUPREME. That's the kind of mail volume X-MEN would get

In April I do a few enhancement covers, but they work so well with what I'm doing that it's more than just a gimmick. With SUPREME #1 it was more than adding a silver or gold logo. We like to add some extras without having to solicit the fact just to make more money.

CHARLES: *What do you see as the future for Image Comics? As fast as you've grown, let's look at the next year for Image.*

ROB: You'll see a halt in growth to focus on building on what we've got. I think Marvel was at its strongest when it had a core of 10-12 books and as soon as they hit 60, and now at 100, they're falling apart. I think you'll see us focus on what we have.

CHARLES: *Do you eventually see Image growing so large that people start going their separate ways?*

ROB: No way. If I can say this, people have no idea how close we are. We're like seven brothers. Seven brothers don't always get along, but they hang tight. I can call my brother a name, but you better not call my brother a name. The core group of seven that started Image are very tight. If someone were to leave we would wish them the best of luck with their careers.

CHARLES: *The concept of Image is that of an open concept. What if Marvel called tomorrow and wanted to do a crossover?*

ROB: Absolutely. We're all doing this for fun. I had fun when I did the Marvel stuff. You're not ever going to hear me say that it was like pulling teeth to work for them.

CHARLES: *Do you see the day of "corporate comics" on its way out? Is Image the future of the comics industry?*

ROB: Yes, I hope so. If Marvel and DC wise up and treat their creators better, they won't be on the decline. They're doing a lot of Pro/Cons just for creators where they can talk over industry concerns. There have been so many people that have said they can't work for us because they're scared. They might be new at, say, Marvel, and they're afraid to work for us. It's like this, we offer these guys triple the rates because we respect them. The bottom line is Marvel and DC have to wake up. Marvel has Epic for creator-owned rights and DC has Milestone, which we're 100% behind.

If you're going to work for hire you have to make sure it's a sweet deal. Marvel's a publicly-owned company. You know where the money's going. You know they have a budget and that the guy they'll squelch is the talent. The problem is that in the entertainment industry, sports, rock & roll, movies, whatever, the talent was able to get their own say so. I think comics have been in a cave for so long that creators are just now standing up for their rights.

CHARLES: *The music industry is a good comparison. I compare you to someone like Billy Ray Cyrus from the pop/country & western music industry. The guy appears to come out of nowhere, comes out with "Achy, Breaky Heart," which everyone swears they hate, and yet it sells millions of copies and everyone's in love with the guy.*

ROB: That's it, I think that's a perfect example. Companies acknowledge the talent once the talent establishes itself. I think over at Marvel we've pretty much established our talent. Marvel hasn't been able to break the barriers in sales we established there. A million in sales is not that hard to establish anymore; 3.5 million, yes. Todd's SPIDER-MAN broke the first barriers, then X-FORCE, then X-MEN. And they haven't been able to do it since then. They'll do it again, I have no doubt. Kids and fans buy comics because of the talent, plain and simple.

CHARLES: *Do you feel you've achieved everything you set out to do by forming Image?*

directing movies and owning creators' rights."

ROB: Not yet. Not until creators at other companies are paid better and have better rights Take **Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane** or myself. When we were doing well at Marvel you saw our images all over T-shirts and posters without us being compensated Look at the NBA. These guys get paid for the use of their images. I hope years from now we have comic creators directing movies and owning creators' rights. I'll know I helped contribute to it.

CHARLES: *Have you, through Image, created the ultimate in creators' rights?*

ROB: Absolutely! Nobody calls the shots on my book, except me. And that's true for the other creators as well

CHARLES: *That's nice, because you can take the accolades of success knowing it was your work. Also, there's nowhere to hide when things go wrong.*

ROB: Hey, I have to listen to the critics. If they don't like my work, I have no one to blame. Earlier I said I didn't like the scripting on X-FORCE. When YOUNGBLOOD #1 came in I wasn't happy with the scripting so I took over the writing on the book. The burden of success or failure of my character lies solely on my shoulders and I wouldn't have it any other way.

CHARLES: *How do you feel about being the brunt of jokes? I think you were referred to as the next anti-Christ.*

ROB: It doesn't bother me. A fan at a recent convention in New York asked why people don't like me and does it bother me? Let me go back to my first work at DC on HAWK & DOVE. I wasn't the most popular guy there. A lot of people felt that I shouldn't have had a say just because of how young I am. I guess I've gotten used to it. There are people that will always blatantly hate my work and others who will always love it. That's never going to change. I always listen to the fans that offer constructive criticism.

CHARLES: *Why the split with Malibu?*

ROB: Let's face it, the core of creators we started with were basically all pencillers. Then we wanted to be plotters, then writers Then we wanted to edit our own books. Over the course of the year we ended up talking with the printers and distributors. Before it was over we all said, "Look, we're already dealing with all these people. Why not be publishers!" It was a natural progression of growth.

CHARLES: *Making the amount of money you guys are making — is that an incentive to work harder or is there that little voice in the back of your mind saying, "Hey, I don't have to do this anymore."*

ROB: Boy, you hit the nail on the head! Let me say this. I have never done anything for money. I love drawing comics, I love seeing the books printed When the book comes from the printer and it's a job well done, that's when I'm the happiest guy in the world. There's nothing like the satisfaction. Nobody in my studio does this work for the money. Granted, the money is a nice added bonus. I do all of it for the creative process; I'm not motivated by money. In fact, I'll quote **Erik Larsen** on that. When he was asked if he would sell the Dragon for $2 million, he said, "Nope, the Dragon is mine and will always be mine." I don't think comics have hit their peak of popularity yet and I won't be satisfied until someone comes up to me and says that everyone in the world is reading comics.

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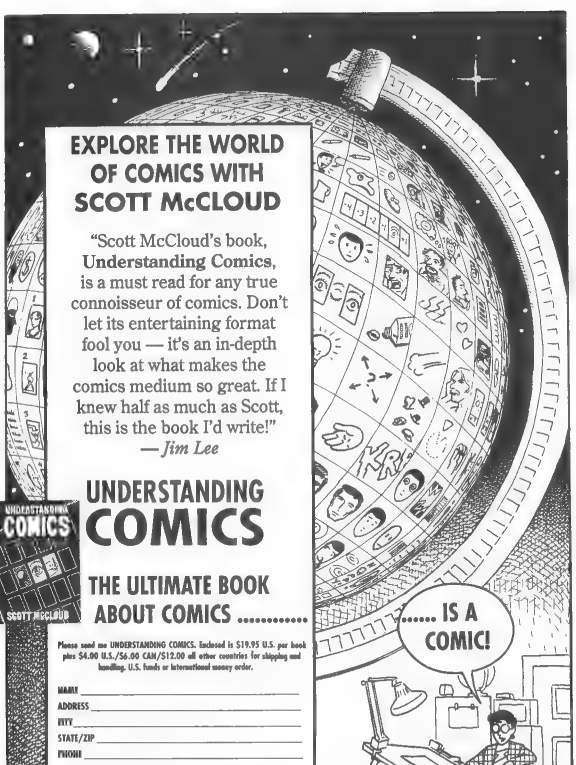

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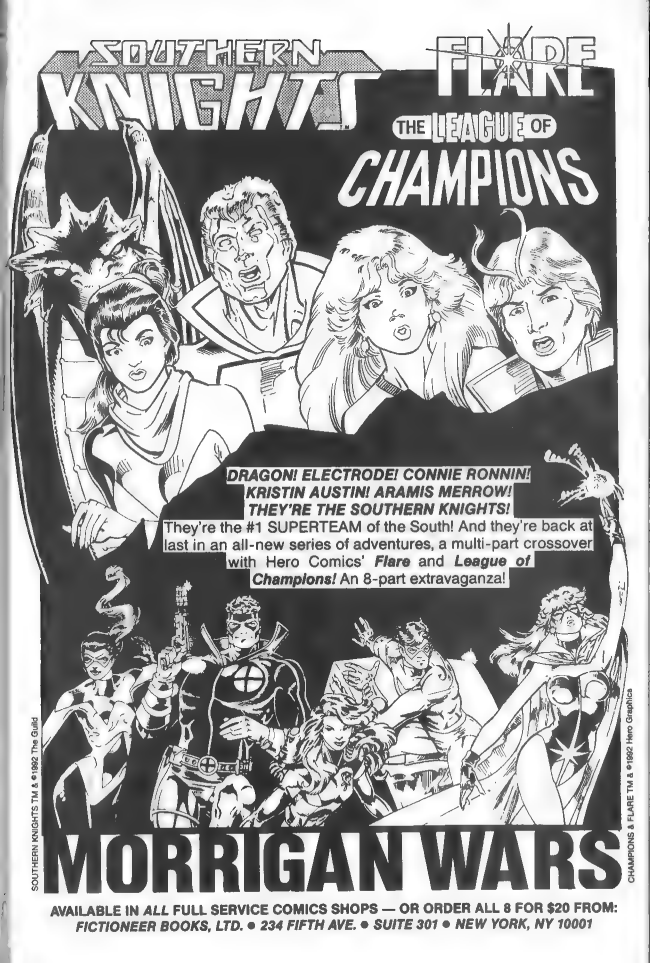
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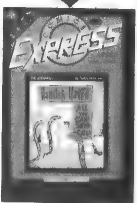

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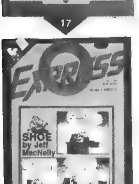

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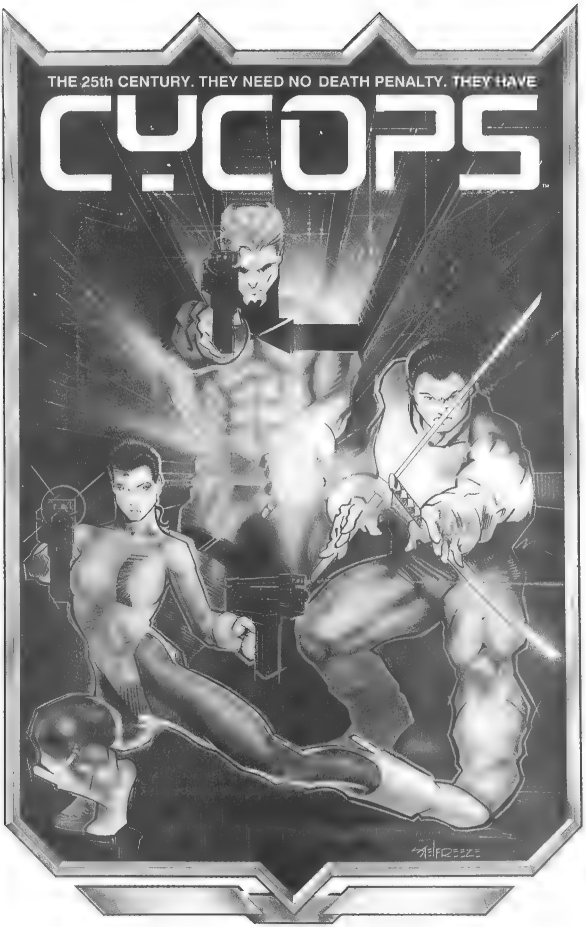
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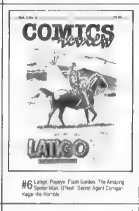
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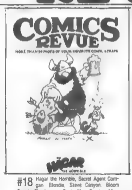

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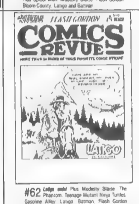

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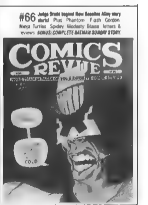

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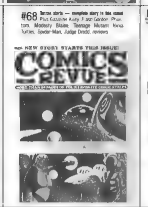

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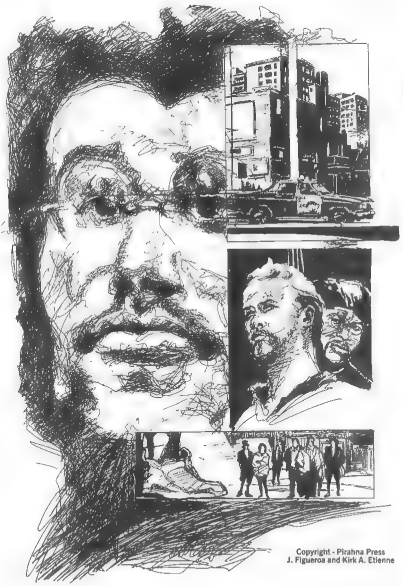

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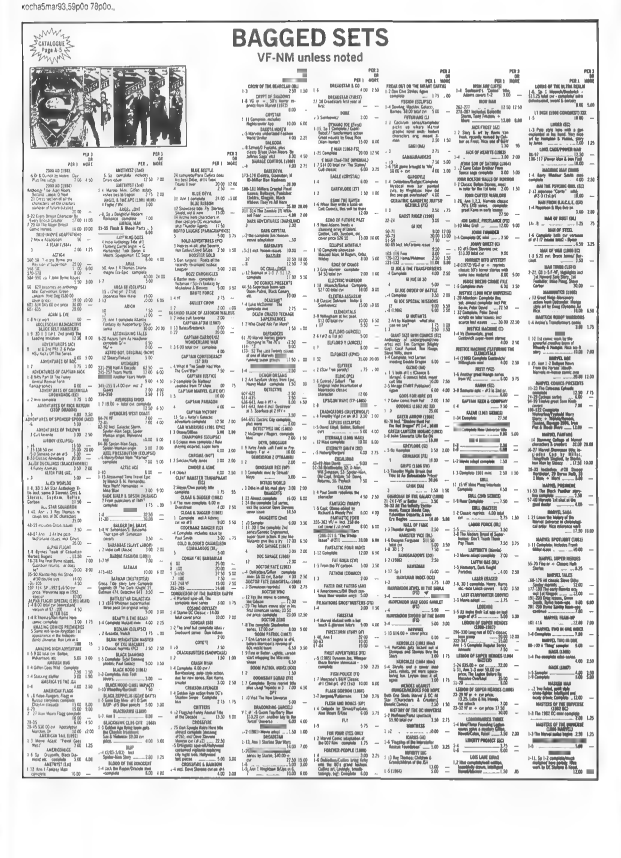

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HOUSE of HAMMER 9

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Back Cover
Issue #14

Dracula-Demon Lover: comic strip adaptation by Don Glut and Gene Hazen "Quatermass's Experiment: comic adaptation featuring Stanley Baker (uncredited) by Don Glut and Gene Hazen. Book Shelf: Reviews of horror books. Back cover: color reprint of the movie poster for "Creature From The Black Lagoon" (1954) by Reynold Brown

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Cover: Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee Battle Vampire Soldiers of Dracula. Fiction: Ken Calder's Hammer Retrospective and Filmography. Behind the Scenes: Hammer Horror Movies. Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes

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HOUSE of HAMMER 13

Fiction: Ken Calder's Hammer Retrospective and Filmography. Behind the Scenes: Hammer Horror Movies. Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes

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Cover: Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee Battle Mummy and other Mythic Beasts. Fiction: The Mummy: Ken Calder's Hammer retrospective. Book Shelf: Reviews. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes

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"Mummy's Shroud": adapted by Donna Gerstein and Steve Leialoha from the Hammer film. Fiction: Stanley Coff: interviewed. Stanley Mehlert speaks. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes. Cover: "Mummy's Shroud" back cover poster

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HOUSE of HAMMER 16

Cover: Star Wars Vogue Takedown by Graham Ingels. Ken Calder's Hammer Retrospective and Filmography. Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes

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HOUSE of HAMMER 17

Fiction: Ken Calder's Hammer Retrospective and Filmography. Behind the Scenes: Hammer Horror Movies. Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes. Cover: "Curse of the Mummy" back cover poster of Hammer's "Curse of the Mummy's Tomb"

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Behind the Scenes: Hammer Horror Movies. Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer films. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes. Cover: "Curse of the Mummy's Tomb" back cover poster of Hammer's "Curse of the Mummy's Tomb"

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"The Reptile": adapted by Rich Buckler from the Hammer film. Fiction: Stanley Coff: interviewed. Stanley Mehlert speaks. Monthly Chiller Diller: Best of Classic Monster Magazine Scenes. Cover: "The Reptile" back cover poster of Hammer's "The Reptile"

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"Aladdin Demon Soldier" by John Bolton. Time out with Ken Calder: Interview with Christopher Lee. Fiction: "Fragments of the Dead" by Chris Lee Sanders: Book Shelf: Reviews of Horror Books and Movies. Back cover: color poster of Japanese Horror Movie "Black Sabbath"

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"An Alumbra Called by Three Moons and Gaea Salvation: Portraits of the Deep": feature art of Bernie Wrightson. Fiction: "Hammer Illustrated: History of Hammer Cinema": back cover poster of Hammer's "The Curse of the Faryy"

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"Swamp Fiends Square" adapted by D. Pettibone and David Gerrold. Book Reports: interviews: "The Sci-Fi Hammer". Fiction: by Stanley G. Weinbaum's "Proteus Island". Back cover: color poster of "Dracula"

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Lovecraft: Cthulhu Mythos: Fiction: by John Bolton: "Lurker Lovecraft": Book Reports: interviews: "Sci-Fi Hammer". Fiction: continued. Psycho Movies

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JAWS 3-D: Behind the Scenes: Universal Studio Tour and 3-D Movie Effects. Fiction: Classic Horror Stories: Barbara Steele: Queen of Horror. Book Shelf: Reviews/reviews: back cover: Hunter Cushing Chair

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HALLS of HORROR 27

Archive Action: Behind the scenes of Hammer and television. Behind the Scenes: Hammer Filmography. Fiction: Ray Bradbury: Archives of Hammer. Pt 1. Book Shelf: Reviews/reviews of French movie poster of "Brides of Dracula"

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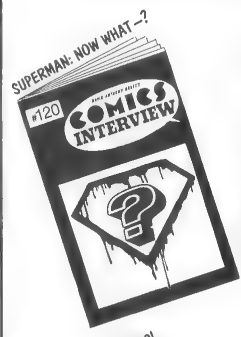

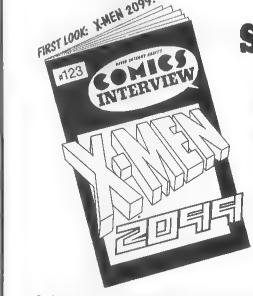

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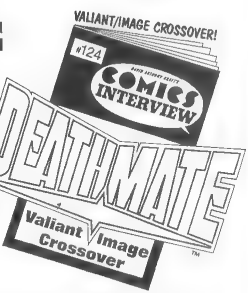

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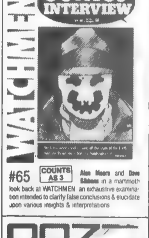

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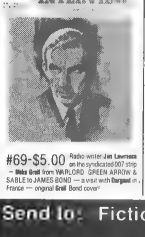

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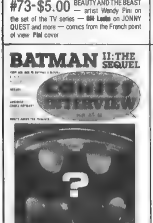

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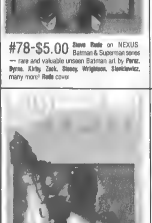

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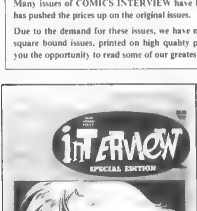
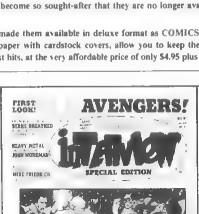
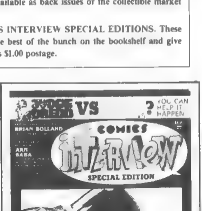


ELFQUEST. A pow-wow with the Pinis on Elfquest, the creation of an elfin world. John Costanza, letterer, tells all of being an artist. Stan Lee goes Hollywood, and the beginning of a legend now the Comico bunch, on their dreams and schemes for the future. Pini cover.



JLA-AVENGERS. George Perez and Roy Thomas tell all about a project that never saw print. Perez's never printed art, only available here! Also John Workman on Heavy Metal, Berke Breathed on Bloom County, Mike Friedrich on the biz end. Perez cover



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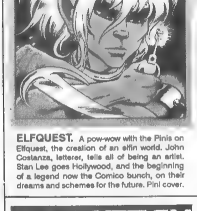
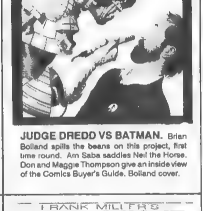


ROBOTECH. Carl Macek & Neil Vokes - from TV to comics - tell why Robotech's a hit. Phil Foglio - Hugo Award winning Sci-Fi artist mumbles about Myth-Adventures, and Cat Yronwode on art for art sake and comics for comics sake. More. Vokes & Rankin cover.

TEENAGE NINJA MUTANT TURTLES. Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird give it up. How Turtles Mania began...(look where it went...) Stan Drake on the colorful career of his girls, Kelly Green and Blondie. Peter B. Gillis on censorship, comedy & death! Eastman & Laird cover.



DARK KNIGHT. Frank Miller expounds on his magnum opus. Fred Finger, on his father, Bill. Bob Kane, on the last 50 yrs since Bat birth. Jerry Robinson, on past memories. Burt Ward on the trouble with tights, and George Roussos on the early days. Miller cover.

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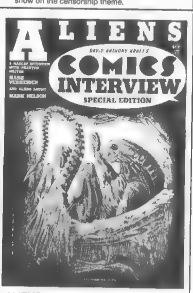
LONE WOLF. Frank Miller speaks his mind. Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima, creators of a Japanese legend, in a talk from Tokyo. Plus First Comics crew Rick Obadiah, Kurt Goldzung, Alex Wald, Paul Gunan, Willie Schubert and Rick Oliver. Kojima cover.



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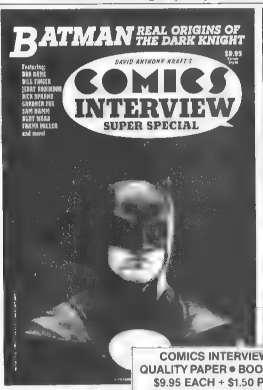

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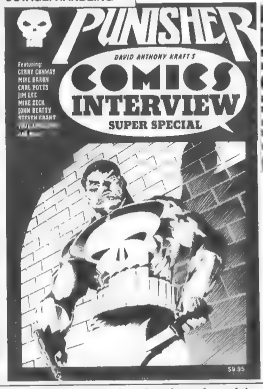

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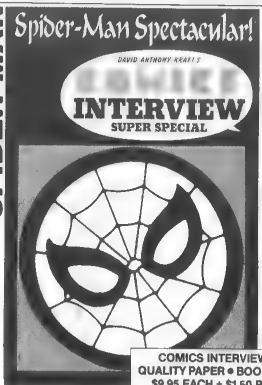

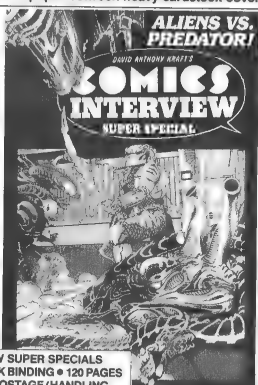

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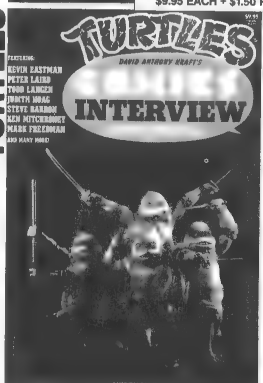

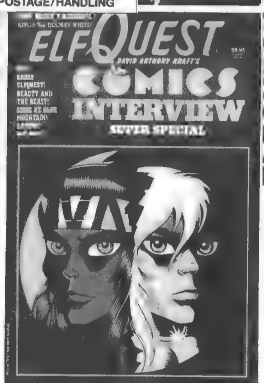

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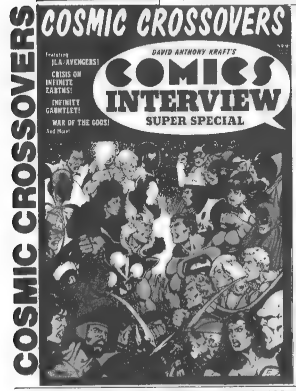

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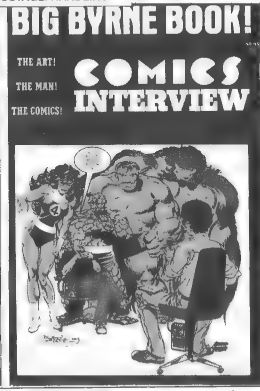

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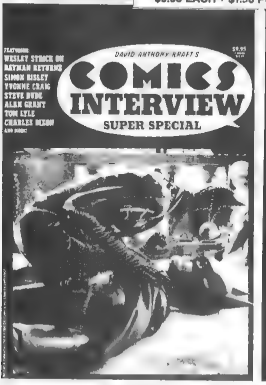

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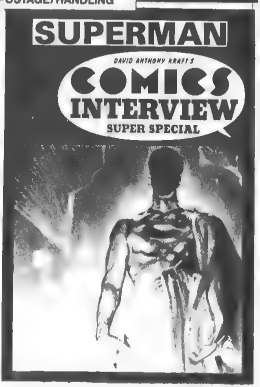

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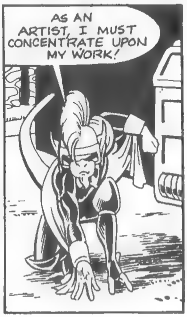

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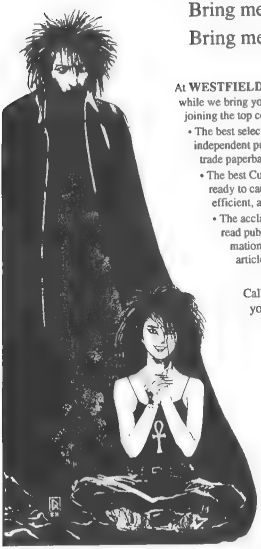

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"It's a full-time job doing new pages instead of reprints."

PAUL NEARY

Heavily contending for the title of one of the busiest prominent persons on the British comics scene, Paul Neary is very difficult to make an appointment with, no matter how eager he is to meet fans and/or other professionals' demands or enquiries.

This conversation took place one pleasant London morning in the Arundel House offices of Marvel UK, but it was a long time in the preparation. Simply said, it was virtually impossible to adjust the schedules of Mr. Neary and Ye Humble Scribe, since both of us have full-time engagements. Luckily, after many missed opportunities and passing months, the Great Eastern Comicbook Convention took place in London, Mr. Neary had the good will to stick into his agenda the talk for the readers of CI and — here it is.

This true creative person in the field of sequential art is in his early forties, and already has a very rich and exciting biography, but it doesn't appear that it seems so for him, for his realistic attitude is rooted in pure professionalism — not in the tendentious modesty characteristic of some "stars". . .

BOJAN M. DJUKIC: *So,how does it feel to be editor-in-chief of Marvel UK?*

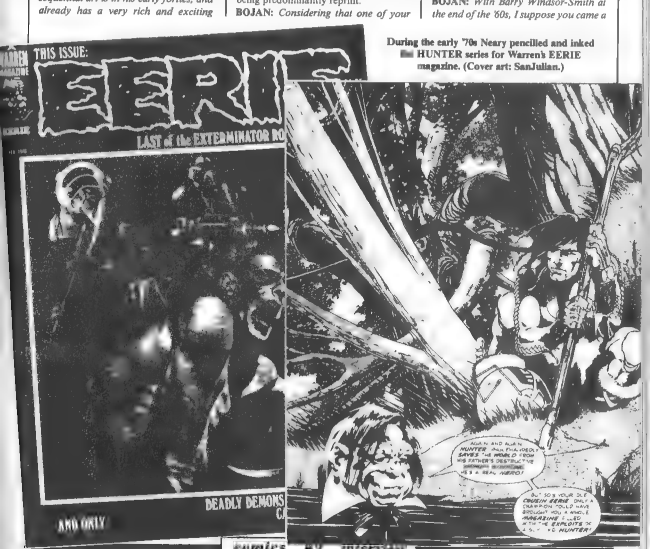
PAUL NEARY: Busy. It's a full-time job involving the organization of various things, producing new pages instead of being predominantly reprint.

BOJAN: *Considering that one of your predecessors later went into the maybe greener pastures of pop-music*, do you consider your eventual future career in a group named "Comic Shop Guys"?*

*(*This moderately successful attempt for making an in-joke was aimed at the current career of Marvel UK editor from the '70s, Neil Tennant — leader of the British pop group Pet Shop Boys.)*

PAUL: No. *(Laughter.)*

BOJAN: *With Barry Windsor-Smith at the end of the '80s, I suppose you came a*



During the early '70s Neary pencilled and inked the HUNTER series for Warren's EERIE magazine. (Cover art: SanJulian.)

"Alan Davis turned up with work. It looked good and

long time before the tidal wave of British writers and artists which crossed over to America . . .

PAUL: Yes . . . Barry Smith and also Steve Parkhouse were the British creators who first made the trip across. They were a little older than me, and beat me to it. And also George Barr was working in the American industry, for Warren Comics. There were a few of us around, but the main "exodus" happened later on.

BOJAN: *But you crossed the Atlantic first, with your work for Marvel?*

PAUL: No, it was Warren Comics. While I was at university I wrote and drew a three-page story which got published in MONSTER TIMES, a short-lived newspaper at the end of the '60s. I must have been around 19 then . . . A Canadian contact called John Mansfield was a big-name fan at the time and took the artwork to Warren, who was producing comics like CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA . . . and also BLAZING COMBAT . . . gorgeous black-and-white magazines that were well printed and published in a slightly larger format than mainstream comics. At the time they were just about to have a lot of European people begin to work for them . . .

BOJAN: *The Spanish guys?*

PAUL: Yes, SELECCIONES ILLUSTRADAS, **José Toutain's** people. They were just beginning to work for Warren. I didn't know about it when I took my stuff across but I saw it in the office before it was actually printed. There was **Esteban Maroto, José Ortiz . . .**

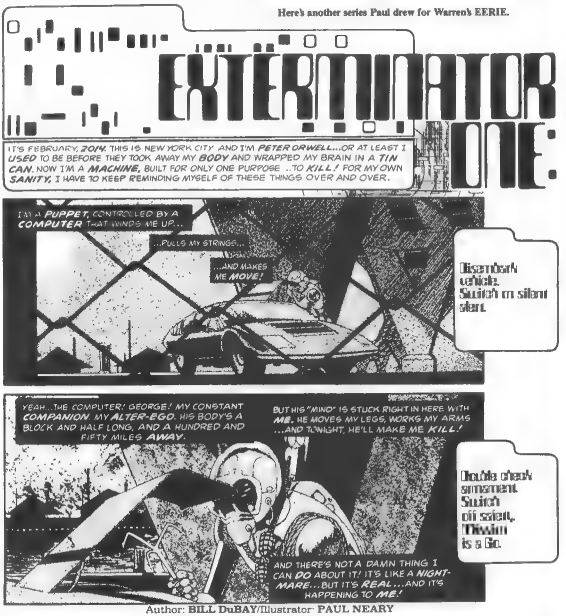
BOJAN: *Gonzalo Mayo?*

PAUL: Yes, **Mayo** . . . also **Luis Garcia, Jose Gonzales** . . . a lot of people . . .

BOJAN: *SanJulian on covers . . .*

PAUL: And **Fernando Fernandez** was

Here's another series Paul drew for Warren's EERIE.


EXTERMINATOR ONE:
IT'S FEBRUARY, 2014. THIS IS NEW YORK CITY AND I'M PETER ORWELL...OR AT LEAST I USED TO BE BEFORE THEY TOOK AWAY MY BODY AND WRAPPED MY BRAIN IN A TIN CAN. NOW I'M A MACHINE, BUILT FOR ONLY ONE PURPOSE ..TO KILL! FOR MY OWN SANITY, I HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF OF THESE THINGS OVER AND OVER.
I'M A PUPPET, CONTROLLED BY A COMPUTER THAT WINDS ME UP...
...PULLS MY STRINGS...
...AND MAKES ME MOVE!
Disembark vehicle. Switch on silent alert.
YEAH...THE COMPUTER! GEORGE! MY CONSTANT COMPANION. MY ALTER-EGO. HIS BODY'S A BLOCK AND HALF LONG, AND A HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES AWAY.
BUT HIS "MIND" IS STUCK RIGHT IN HERE WITH ME. HE MOVES MY LEGS, WORKS MY ARMS ...AND TONIGHT, HE'LL MAKE ME KILL!
Double check armament. Switch oil seiect. Thwain is a Go.
AND THERE'S NOT A DAMN THING I CAN DO ABOUT IT! IT'S LIKE A NIGHTMARE...BUT IT'S REAL...AND IT'S HAPPENING TO ME!

Author: **BILL DuBAY**/Illustrator **PAUL NEARY**

BATMAN ®1992 DC Comics, Inc. / CAPTAIN AMERICA & X-MEN ®1992 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. / He'll Angel & Death's Head ®1992 Marvel UK Limited / EERIE Magazine, Hunter, Exterminator ®1974 Warren Pub.

I couldn't understand why he wasn't already published."

there . . .

BOJAN: *So again, you came into the "Warren — Phase Two" when they definitely had to abandon Jim Warren's attempts to revive the EC image and style of comics.*

PAUL: I think that's true. The "old guard" had quit almost together for contractual reasons. There was some kind of a wrangle there after **Rocco Mastroserio's** death, and pretty soon they left . . . and **Bill DuBay** came across from the West Coast to pick up the editorial reins. It was during that time that the whole changeover went from being as you said "EC Revisited" to being more of a European showcase, I guess.

BOJAN: *Yes, later on — I remember — they even introduced some French people . . .*

PAUL: **Paul Gillon,** yes. He was good. Great stuff . . . but that was just reprint, though. The earlier stuff they've actually written in America and had it drawn by the Spanish artists. I think **Louise Jones** took over from **Bill DuBay** and moved away from this, and began to employ more U.S. people. This was in the few years before she went to Marvel . . .

BOJAN: *And became Louise Simonson.*

PAUL: Yes.

BOJAN: *One thing that I stumbled upon reading a recent issue of COMICS INTERNATIONAL (a British trade newspaper independently created and edited by Derek "Dez" Skinn, with the recent addition of color and national distribution) was about you . . . I'm interested about your co-operation with penciler Alan Davis before his pencils went into "the perfect marriage" with the inks of Mark Farmer. You were associated on many occasions with Mr. Davis, right?*

PAUL: Yes. I had a brief stint in Marvel UK before I came here this time. It must have been about 12 years ago . . . it was from '79 to '81. I was working as an art director and eventually became editor-in-chief just for about 18 months. But I was there for a while and during that time . . .

BOJAN: *Before this tenure?*

PAUL: Yes, as I said it was at the end of the '70s, from 1979 to 1981. So it's a little over ten years ago. Even when I got there we had good people working in Marvel UK. **Dez Skinn** was collecting together a pool of talent and he was attempting to put together new comics, principally to do with Spider-Man and Hulk . . .

BOJAN: *Was it a British-produced HULK?*

PAUL: Yes . . .

Neary inks Alan Davis' pencils (DETECTIVE COMICS #575).

BOJAN: *It's important now to stress the fact — not a reprint, but domestically produced comics, unlike AVENGERS, SPIDER-MAN . . .*

PAUL: That's right. Dez was making new pages in Britain. He had **David Lloyd** working on NIGHTRAVEN, **Dave Gibbons** was working on DR. WHO, **Steve Dillon** was just beginning (he was 16 or something). I joined and . . . right after Dez left and I became editor-in-chief, **Alan Davis** turned up with some work. It looked very good and I couldn't understand why he wasn't already published. He wasn't that interested in doing superhero work, but I wanted to bring back CAPTAIN BRITAIN. So I asked him to re-design the costume. I wrote a few plots which brought Captain Britain from where he was left in the last series written by **Steve Parkhouse.** He'd been left dropping through the mists of time. I wrote a few plots and I asked **Dave Thorpe** . . . who was working in-house as an editor at the time to script it. We worked like this on the first three episodes; after that I left and **Bernie Jaye** took over as editor on the strip and put **Alan Moore** on the writing chores.

BOJAN: *So it was the nucleus of the talent which literally spread around the world?*

PAUL: Yes, I had already given **Alan Moore** his first job in a back-up strip in DR. WHO WEEKLY. **Steve Moore** who was . . . they have the same name, but are not related . . . Steve was writing DR. WHO for us and he recommended Alan for the job. When **Dez Skinn** moved to

"Marvel UK was integral in bringing together talent which

the WARRIOR magazine he began to employ some of the people that worked for Marvel. I recommended **Alan Davis** to him, he already knew **Steve Dillon** and **Alan Moore,** who began to work on Marvel Man. WARRIOR and Marvel used many of the same creators at the time.

BOJAN: *Like a small outpost?*

PAUL: Yes . . . except that WARRIOR was more experimental, also creators kept copyright on their characters. Dez was always interested in doing new stuff and he had a lot of enthusiasm. It was a shame when WARRIOR went down, but the movement continues. Al in a way carried on what was happening in WARRIOR. At the very least, Marvel UK was very integral in bringng together a lot of talent which, as you said, dispersed across the world, and it's happening again in a similar way now. Twelve years later we have people working here that are British and not widely published before, so it seems like there are always good people around.

BOJAN: *You have changed your style very often. Comparing your work for Marvel and Warren, do you have your personal style and were you primarily penciller, inker, or both?*

PAUL: Like most people that worked with Warren I used to be both. They didn't really have a "penciller/inker" system . . .

BOJAN: . . . *but you had, for example, Carmine Infantino inked by Alex Nino!*

PAUL: That was later on, after I had left. **Bill DuBay** was a personal friend of Infantino and he brought him in. Probably Carmine didn't want to ink his own work. Carmine was from DC Comics and there they always had a penciller/inker system. I'm not quite sure how it worked, but I like them both separately and their styles really did go together well . . .

BOJAN: *It was really beautiful to behold. Now considering, for example, your version of Captain America and your work on some horror titles for Warren, I can see a drastic change which is not diminishing the quality of your work. I'm just interested in why you did it?*

PAUL: Well . . .

BOJAN: . . . *Is it some kind of*

Paul's pencils inked by the one and only Joe Sinnott (CAPTAIN AMERICA #319).

HELLO, CAPTAIN! THIS IS AN UNEXPECTED HONOR!
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY APPREHENDING THIS MAN.
NOT AT ALL. THAT CREEP'S PUT OVER TEN LOCAL BLUES IN THE HOSPITAL.
SAY, BLACKLASH--
--YOU USED TO BE A WELL-CONNECTED NITMAN. WHAT'S WITH THESE SMALL-TIME JEWELRY HEISTS?
I DON'T GIVE A HANG ABOUT MY REP ANYMORE I'LL BE DEAD SOON ANYWAY. ALL I'M TRYING TO DO IS GET ENOUGH BREAD TOGETHER TO SUPPORT MY MOM AFTER I'M GONE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'LL BE DEAD SOON?
COME ON, MAN--YOU MUST KNOW THERE'S A MAD KILLER ON THE LOOSE, GUNNING DOWN HIGH PROFILE COSTUMED CRIMINALS LIKE ME. I'M NOT ONE TO SCARE EASY--
--BUT WHEN HE OFFED MY OLD BUDDY THE MELTER--THAT'S WHEN I KNEW NOT EVEN I WAS SAFE!
*IN AVENGERS # 263.

has dispersed across the world, and it's happening again."

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY PLACE LIKE THIS...
AND I'M GLAD!
HOW 'BOUT A HUG, LONGSHOT.
ALISON, WHAT THIS PLACE MAKES ME FEEL...
RIGHT NOW, I COULD USE A LITTLE TENDER LOVING CARE.
...IS THAT FEAR?
THE HECK WITH IT--
--AH SAY WE FIGHT THE TOAD!

More of Paul's black ink over Alan's graphite (X-MEN ANNUAL #11).

"Moebius/Giraud division" or is it just the assignment which requires the use of various techniques, styles etc.?

PAUL: Depending on the work . . . who I'm working with . . . I've drawn in different ways. To begin with, I became an American comics fan when American comics came to England in the very early '60s. In 1960 I was ten and suddenly everyone in the playground was standing around with these comics! One morning it happened — just like that! One friend of mine was holding what seemed to be a very small comic . . . I'd never seen anything like it, I couldn't believe it! There were no science fiction comics in Britain at the time.

BOJAN: *But what about DAN DARE, by Frank Hampson, Frank Bellamy . . .?*

PAUL: There used to be one to two pages of sf in some anthology comics.

BOJAN: *So there were no magazines devoted entirely to sf?*

PAUL: No, not at all. My brother used to read EAGLE and I read just the front and the back of the cover. That's it, I didn't look at the other stuff. My brother used to pull the covers off them, to pile up DAN DARE and throw the rest away. Basically, there was very little sf stuff around and suddenly when all these SUPERMAN and BATMAN comics turned up it was quite unbelievable. And there it was all at once, right in front of us. I became a real American comics fan at that point and a lot of other people of the same age did too . . . **Dez Skinn** did, I think it's the same with **Brian Bolland** and **Dave Gibbons.** The comics we remember were DC comics because in 1960 there weren't any Marvel ones. The comics that were to become Marvel were still "monster" comics. It was okay, but SPIDER-MAN hadn't happened yet, THE FANTASTIC FOUR hadn't happened yet, so most of the people of my age remember just DC's from their early days.

When I began to work for Warren I was just outgrowing four-color comics. I saw some of Warren's black and white art-type comics, and a lot of artists I recognized were from EC days . . . and also people like **Steve Ditko** were drawing there. I just thought it was terrific! I went to see **Jim Warren** and ended up doing sf stories and an sf/barbarian strip called HUNTER. The work was very influenced by the artists whose work I liked in comics at the time. **Neal Adams** was the real big buzz at the time, and I've always loved the EC people . . . **Frazetta, Williamson, Wally Wood, Krenkel, Crandall** and the others. I liked the work of **Jeff Jones** and there was a strong barbarian movement around at the time. CONAN was big, **Barry Smith** . . .

BOJAN: *A whole sword and sorcery genre in comics was getting off the ground . . .*

Cover pencils and inks by Paul (CAPTAIN AMERICA #303).

"I've refined my style to make it easier for me to draw."

PAUL: Yes, it was very big. So, all that imagery was in my head — **Jeff Jones, Frank Frazetta, Neal Adams** who was appearing also in the color comics . . . there was a mixture of influences there which I was affected by. It was only later on when I left Warren that I began to get distracted from that

I started to work with **Syd Jordan** on the JEFF HAWKE syndicated daily strip. Syd took a much different view of things; he wasn't really into comics and had a lot of photographic references around him. I began to draw in a slightly different way during the time I was working with him.

I also did some film adaptations for THE HOUSE OF HAMMER. **Dez Skinn** was running that and I did some movie adaptations for Dez and it was a further step toward drawing in a more realistic way — a photographic way. I was interested in that for a while but I stopped working with Syd after about 3-4 years. That led up to the time I spent in Marvel UK for the first time round . . . that must be about '75-'79. When I went to Marvel UK I decided to really forget about using photographic influences that helped me to draw and just sit down and get into mainstream comics. In the early work I did for Marvel UK, I was really finding my feet in cartooning. That was a learning time for me being in Marvel UK; I discovered storytelling and ended up drawing much more quickly. By the time I left Marvel UK to freelance for Marvel US, I was up to three pages a day.

BOJAN: All *pencils and inks??*

PAUL: No, they call it "breakdowns", almost finished pencils. While I was doing AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D. and CAPTAIN AMERICA that was the kind of rate I was doing, which for me was odd. I had been doing only a couple of pages per week while I was at Warren. Over the years since I began to draw freely in this way; the standards of what I've been doing have come back up to the standards of what I was doing at Warren. I could sit down and do that HUNTER stuff much more easily now . . . so you're right, I've refined my style in a way that it makes it easier for me to draw.

BOJAN: *These early experiences with comics . . . did they trigger your ambition to become an artist? And how did you start your association with Marvel USA? Did you just go over there or you mailed your pages to them?*

PAUL: Well . . .

BOJAN: *. . . and when did you start professionally — officially speaking?*

PAUL: I've been working for fanzines in Britain . . . for an Irish fanzine called HEROES UNLIMITED, from the time I was sixteen till the time I left university. I was about nineteen when I did the three-page story I told you about. I sent it to the MONSTER TIMES and they printed it. And I just went from there! The work was taken to **Jim Warren** and I was still there all afternoon . . . we had a very lively discussion. He ended up giving me a script, a try-out one, and I pencilled and inked it and it was the beginning of about eight years of working for Warren. It would be interesting to tell a long story how I tried and tried and tried to get my work published but it wasn't like that. After that I just moved around inside the industry.

After Warren I worked for **Syd Jordan** on JEFF HAWKE and then went to work with **Dez Skinn,** whom I've known from the early days in fanzines when I was at college in Yorkshire, not far from where he was living . . . and when he began to work for Marvel I contacted him. I began to work there, I drew HULK with **David Lloyd** and I did some BLACK KNIGHT work with **Steve Parkhouse, John Stokes.** When I left Marvel UK I already knew **Jim Shooter.**

Paul inking over Bryan Hitch (HELL'S ANGEL #4).

"I did SPIDER-MAN, X-FACTOR . . . a lot of annuals."

We used to talk on the phone when I needed pages from him for Marvel in Britain. He knew me, he knew my work on HUNTER from Warren days and he had already suggested that he thought my style might suit CAPTAIN AMERICA.

I asked him if he had any work when I left Marvel UK as an editor. Jim lined me up with **Mark Gruenwald**, who needed a penciller for CAPTAIN AMERICA. That's how I began to draw for Marvel US . . . it was kind of inside the company, really.

All through the '80s I worked for Marvel and I did CAPTAIN AMERICA, KA-ZAR, SPIDER-MAN ANNUALS, X-FACTOR . . . a lot of annuals, and ended up doing the NICK FURY graphic novel series and then I began working with **Alan Davis** as an inker . . . DC BATMAN stuff and EXCALIBUR . . . and we ended up with the WOLVERINE graphic novel which we wrote and drew. That was the last thing I did for Marvel; then I came here.

BOJAN: *Can you take us through the history of Marvel UK and the people who have sat in that chair before you?*

PAUL: Marvel had been pretty well a reprint organization in the very early days of the mid '70s. It was reprinting STAR WARS, that was the monetary input. The STAR WARS films had sparked off a big response in America and it was echoed in England. Marvel UK was small, just an office in Seven Oaks in Kent. They re-processed the pages for black and white magazines with grey tones before publishing them. Dez talked **Stan Lee** into upgrading that reprint organization into something that would produce the British pages. That's really how Marvel UK began in the form that it is now. In terms of people that have done this job, there was Dez; when he left I took over briefly and then I suppose for quite a few years, leading up to the last year, **Jenny O'Connor** was here. So really you can count the people on the fingers of one hand.

BOJAN: *Was there any discontinuity in the existence of Marvel UK as a company during all these years?*

PAUL: No. It's had different emphasis on the kind of publications it put out. When I left I think the real steam went out of sf mainstream comics or heroes. **Jenny O'Connor** and **Robert Sutherland** were much more interested in the "nursery market," like CARE BEARS etc. In the mainstream section from time to time they had limited success.

BOJAN: *Excuse me for this question. I don't want to sound rude, but is there any sense in the existence of Marvel UK when we already have the import of all the Marvel comic books directly from the United States?*

PAUL: Well, the comics that come from America are not distributed on a network that ever allows the big sales. The distributors don't see them as particularly marketable in big numbers — but they are present in some newsagents' shops. The funny thing is that the comics come in a kind of "job lot" which is a collection of various different types of comic titles that they put in newsagents' shops without individually identifying them. So, X-MEN sells roughly the same as anything else in England; there isn't much of an emphasis or a knowledge by the newsagents what the different comics are about. They really don't particularly like the small format. The comics have to be sold cheaply. They can't sell them in big numbers. They sell through the import-shops, but also not in big numbers . . . the kind of numbers they're selling here is a very small fraction of the American print run, and it's an interesting extra for them, but it's really just 5-6 thousand copies of each title.

BOJAN: *Is the original production in London intended just for the UK market or including abroad and USA?*

PAUL: Which particular strips?

BOJAN: *The strips you are producing in general in your line of comics.*

PAUL: OVERKILL — the new fortnightly comic that we are bringing out is

Central portion of a 3-piece wraparound/foldout cover for the first issue of the new DEATH'S HEAD ongoing series. Pencils by Liam Sharp with Paul's inks.

"Every plot with American characters I send to America

Paul's never pencils for HELL'S ANGEL #2 — later inked by Sharp.

to be sure we're not going against their developments."

going to be in two different formats. It's the first time we've done this. We're bringing out five heroes in one comic in Britain, in a slightly larger format than the American monthlies. And in America each one of these heroes has his or her own American comic. So, it's five comics in America and one fortnightly comic in England.

BOJAN: *And how much are you independent in your production from the Marvel N.Y.C. office?*

PAUL: In terms of our own heroes — totally independent.

We have had talks with **Mark Gruenwald** and **Tom DeFalco** about various approaches that they think are pertinent to the American and British markets, and in that advisory capacity talks with them are always interesting. When we use their heroes, every plot that contains the American characters I send to America to be sure that we're not going against their characterization or plot developments.

BOJAN: *So it has to be approved, the use of their properties, right?*

PAUL: I could do it in a less rigorous way than I'm doing it, but I want to do it properly. It's my choice to have a good relationship with our US counterparts. I want them to see the pages, to make sure that we don't do anything they wouldn't like.

BOJAN: *You had and still have other titles outside the Marvel Universe, in your agenda. Can you explain how did it happen, to include TOM & JERRY (till recently), GHOST BUSTERS etc. in your line?*

PAUL: Most comics operations in Britain have two sides to them . . . they have the origination capacity and also they have a licensing side which will buy the rights predominantly to characters that are well known for some reason or another. Actually, there are just two main reasons . . . some classic characters like Rupert the Bear are well-known historically, and other characters like Tom & Jerry are widely seen on television . . . that's a very important part of the deal. So, if the character comes on TV and there's an awareness in the country, it's much easier to sell the comic book under those conditions. And when something is on TV and it's been seen, then comic-book companies like us will pitch in for the rights to make a comic book, really to sell it off the back of the TV program. So, the properties you named were on TV at the time when the first publishing occurred.

BOJAN: *So how come SCOOBY DOO is published here instead of by some other company, maybe one which specializes in adaptations of TV shows in comic-book form?*

PAUL: I think it depends on the availability and who has contacts with whom. Marvel UK paradoxically has a strong tie-in with Warner Bros.

BOJAN: . . . *But Warner owns DC Comics?!*

PAUL: Warner Bros. owns DC and it's interesting that when we go along to Frankfurt, Germany, to the book fairs, we're there with our American cousins on the same stall and the Warner Bros. people would come to talk to us! In America there's opposition and in Britain we have a different arrangement.

BOJAN: *So that's the reason why you have TINY TOONS and they were intended to be published by DC, as I heard last year during the UKCAC?*

PAUL: Precisely. WB has licensed it to us. We have a very good relationship with their London office.

BOJAN: *It's astonishing, since there was London Editions (now merged with Fleetway into Fleetway Editions) which published DC-related materials . . .*

PAUL: Yes, that's true.

BOJAN: *Do you see a successful future for this company you're the head of — considering the absence from comic shops? The appearances at the news-agents' shops aren't regular and some titles aren't easy to find . . .*

PAUL: One of the things we are doing now at Marvel UK is increasing the quality of our output and explaining to the trade the reasons why they should stock our product. It's a long job. Our new fortnightly comic, OVERKILL, contains fully-originated strips instead of being largely reprint as it might have been in the past. We're trying to re-vamp our output and also associate the Marvel UK name with quality publications.

BOJAN: *Why is the marketing non-*

Character and suit design sketches for HELL'S ANGEL by Paul.

"The purpose of our OVERKILL comic, containing

sufficient in some cases? For instance, NIGHTRAVEN — THE HOUSE OF CARDS by Jamie Delano and David Lloyd is almost impossible to be found and it wasn't advertised enough . . .

PAUL: What you've said is a contradictory statement . . . what you said is you can't get it and it wasn't advertised enough. Those two statements don't fit. NIGHTRAVEN was solicited through the same channels that we solicit all our publications through.

BOJAN: *Yes, I understand but I'm trying to connect the facts that I didn't find the hype, shall we say, the hype behind it which can be seen behind some other titles. In bookstores, comic shops and in newsagents' shops I just couldn't find NIGHTRAVEN and I wanted it desperately . . . I don't expect you to answer me why I can't find it, Mr. Neary; I'm just curious why it isn't more present on the market . . .*

PAUL: Because not many people wanted to order it . . . that's the answer. When some bookshops don't have it and some do have it, it's because there weren't enough orders. Our print run is set by the orders we get beforehand.

What we did with that graphic novel is what we do with all our comics. That is — to advertise to the trade. This is not in generally-available magazines. They're trade magazines and trade release pamphlets which go to the actual warehouses and the distribution companies.

BOJAN: *Like internal newsletters?*

PAUL: Exactly. To Diamond, to Titan Books . . . and what happens is that Marvel has the leaflets which offer up the publications that come out that month in order for orders to be placed. And we use that system for everything we do and we put the NIGHTRAVEN graphic novel through that procedure.

The orders that are made are used to determine the print run. Then we take the comics or graphic novels that we have printed and we send them to the people in numbers that they wanted them, and that process is the same for *everything* we publish.

BOJAN: *Is there a chance for creation of some kind of . . . shall we say . . . "subuniverse" which would be incorporated with the reciprocity in an American university of American Marvel heroes, with limited independence or maybe more close cooperation?*

PAUL: Yeah, that's exactly what's happening. The entire purpose of our new OVERKILL comic, containing new heroes, is that we release them into the Marvel Universe. Incidentally, OVERKILL is a first in British publishing, because all the strips in there relate to each other. They are all happening in the same place and time . . . and one hero can meet another hero in the pages of either strip. The pages of OVERKILL will contain the British Marvel Universe! American editors are also interweaving them with the stories that we've made using the American heroes. There's obviously a complete overlap of the two universes that exist in the world at the same time . . . if Iron Man flies across the Atlantic, he's going to meet Hell's Angel and all the others.

DEATH'S HEAD II #2 cover by Neary & Sharp. Next page: More Warren work.

BOJAN: *Are we going to see the rise of the independent serials which would make a whole with the current American serials so the New York HQ would become more integrated with Marvel UK?*

PAUL: The creative overlap and agreement that's occurred since I've been here is, I think, at an all-time high. And we've had one or two American editors expressing their interest in the heroes that we are doing. **Fabian Nicieza** has been very supportive and is interested in MOTORMOUTH because it stars a young teenage character. He was playing around with the idea of using her in NEW WARRIORS and of course I'm in total agreement with that . . . I love it. We need to establish the character of

new heroes, is to release them into the Marvel Universe."

Motormouth fully, before it can be "borrowed" successfully. In a few months when the Americans have seen what our characters are, what they represent, I'd love to see them using them freely in their comic books.

BOJAN: *It would be much easier than teaming up Batman and Judge Dredd because of the legal stuff . . .*

PAUL: Yes, that's it. There are no legal complications and in the DEATH'S HEAD II mini-series the last issue was complete mayhem with the American heroes and Death's Head getting involved in some very strange things. *(The magazine is carefully examined during this part of the conversation.)*

BOJAN: *This is a completely British comic, is it?*

PAUL: We have produced DEATH'S HEAD II and we used the Fantastic Four for the second issue and there are some alternative versions of Marvel heroes of the future in issue four. Futuristic versions of a lot of Marvel America characters . . . we're bringing back THE RHINO in a very strange form, we've got futuristic versions of Captain America and a lot of the other American superheroes. It really is good fun . . .

BOJAN: *In a way — "Marvel World of Tomorrow — the British Way"!*

PAUL: Yes! *(Laughter.)*

BOJAN: *And this comic book, by the way, looks very* comic-book *compared to the dominant British comic-magazine format; do you have an impression that British principle of the magazine-anthology is not functioning in the best way in the context of the American comic-book image?*

PAUL: From the outside it must look confusing, what we are doing, perhaps even looking as though we're not sure what we are doing. We know what we're doing . . . we're aiming different formats at different segments of the marketplace. The feedback that we get from distributors and retailers sometimes tells us different than we think ourselves. We might sometimes make decisions that appear to the comic fan to be crazy, but which are done for reasons that are hidden from the "normal" comic reader. It often has a lot to do with the distribution companies and their methods of selling to the people that they had contacts with in the retail world.

BOJAN: *That is why we have NIGHT-RAVEN — HOUSE OF CARDS in France in album format for their market instead of here . . .*

PAUL: If you put out the book here in Britain and it sells 5,000 copies and then the French publisher comes to you and buys the rights to publish and when he tenders it in his country and it sells five times more, well . . . that's his gain!

BOJAN: *Is there a disproportion in your desire to compromise the editions for younger audiences and "Epic-like" image of graphic novels for more adult and/or sophisticated readers and is it a . . . 10 to speak, a happy solution?*

PAUL: I think that it is . . . there are two separate markets there and I think that one should not be an off-shoot of the

other. If you think about the ages of people that read the comics, when they are 13-14 they read comics far more than when they are 19-20. And kinds of profits that are available to the company in what's become known as the *mainstream* which most of the comics existing in America are — I'm talking about SPIDER-MAN, AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA . . . the Marvel mainstream — takes care of most of the audiences in terms of the reading numbers. And when you move up towards the older age groups, the numbers come down and the prices go up which is the way it works the best financially. But I think that in our terms we've got to handle the mainstream first. We have to . . . I want to make a thriving mainstream publication in this company before I think about the graphic novels and work for older fans.

BOJAN: *Like this DEATH'S HEAD comic book?*

PAUL: I consider it to be mainstream because its content is suitable for the mainstream readership, and it's also understandable by them. We have considered the way in which we have depicted the nudity and violence, I think it's suitable for the Marvel mainstream in America.

BOJAN: *Now, one question about the technological side of the craft of producing the comic pages; I've noticed on your stand now during the last convention that your artists are drawing more and more with markers and fibre pens — tools which are favored more than the classical tools, like dip-pens and brushes . . . Is there any editorial control over the technology of work and is it similar to the one in the USA? I didn't notice on the American originals that they're abandoning "old-fashioned" drawing equipment . . .*

PAUL: Yes. I know what you're saying. There were always people who've used markers like . . . I think . . .

BOJAN: . . . *Gil Kane?*

PAUL: Gil Kane, yes . . . he works with them and . . .

BOJAN: . . . *Neal Adams . . . John Byrne . . .*

PAUL: I didn't know that . . .

BOJAN: *Yes, Mr. Adams uses a Pilot fineliner for inking his pencils. Other artists prefer Japanese stuff like Tombows and Penteli. They have invented some stuff which is a fountain brush* (the interviewer shows Mr. Neary a Pentel brush-pen with permanent ink cartridges) *and I know that Mr. Byrne probably uses something like this, see?* (at the same time the interviewer gets a market-tool of Japanese origin which demonstrates a nice thick-and-thin effect of the line, which he leaves with Mr. Neary). *It imitates the brush line with a very flexible rubber tip . . .*

PAUL: That's what **Liam Sharp** uses to ink! This one here, this is the fibre pen with the quality of brush and it holds a very good point . . . I think you have to have a very steady hand because it becomes very fat if you move it even slightly towards the paper. It takes a different discipline. When I was at

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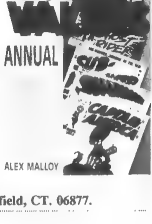

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"I've moved from work on the page to overseeing projects."

Warren they *tried* to stop me from using a felt-tip because at the time they weren't waterproof. They didn't have the permanent ones! I think that's the danger, the pen in use not being waterproof. So obviously that's something we have to be very careful about here, sending them through the mail . . . but as far as I'm concerned, if it's providing a black, clean line I'm fine with it. I know that **Gary Erskine** uses a wedge-shaped pen which is a felt-tip which looks like the end of a very small screwdriver . . .

BOJAN: *. . . like lettering pens for thick-and-thin effects?*

PAUL: That's right, *italic*, yes . . . it's about three millimeters across the end. He uses a corner of it for thin lines and uses the flat side one way or the other for medium and thick lines. He's very versatile with it. I mean, just looking at the pages I couldn't tell, I'd say he's using the brush. If I find that he's using a match-stick dipped in ink I wouldn't care. If it works like it does, it's good enough for me.

BOJAN: *Of course. Neal Adams' pages inked with his Pilot fineliner are not low in quality compared to his previous pages rendered with pen and brush dipped in India ink . . .*

PAUL: Yes, of course . . . although personally I prefer more of a line thickness variation.

BOJAN: *Okay . . . where's Marvel UK now compared to other British publishing houses?*

PAUL: Because we've been for about the last ten years really concentrating on the younger age group we don't have a cult following. It's not natural for the top-quality freelancers to work for us in the adventure genre. I hope to turn it around. I mean, we have a capability now of putting out a smaller number of very nice comics and I think it's a matter of us just being here for long enough, doing good stuff so that other top creators just aren't that surprised by the fact that Marvel UK has done something which looks nice. I think if we are here long enough, eventually it might sink in that we mean business.

BOJAN: *How do you see your personal future in the comic-book field? In this office or maybe in some other area and/or media? Or maybe outside the comics?!*

PAUL: I seem to have moved away from doing work on the page into overseeing projects, but I don't necessarily need to stay in this area. If maybe in a year's time someone offers me a nice graphic novel I might be persuaded.

BOJAN: *Do you sense the time will come when the British creators will incline less towards the American market and publishers because of the much better and more lucrative situation here, in Britain?*

PAUL: I think that in terms of the creator's interest the bonus system's a lot better, a lot more established in America. And people are very bonus-conscious! When they come to the book or if they're offered a book, they want to know what and how the sales are and they'll get their calculators out and do the little sums to see what their page rate'll eventually be.

BOJAN: *Calculating their royalty in advance?*

PAUL: In a lot of cases, especially at Marvel, the royalty can make up the majority of the paycheck. The page-rate becomes secondary to the sales of the book. Creators in Britain are not used to this sort of reasoning . . . but we're re-writing the book on that.

BOJAN: *What is the understanding of British creators?*

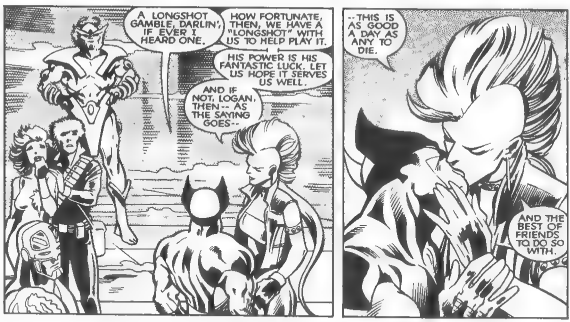
PAUL: I don't think that the British creators really believe that a comic company is going to pay them much in the way of royalties. It's very different here because on DEATH'S HEAD all the creators got much more money on the royalty than they got on the payment. And if you worked in terms of actual page rate it would be phenomenal inside the British industry. It would create a sensation if we said *"We're paying that much a page"* on the outset.

BOJAN: *Which are the creator's rights here, like for example — when he or she creates something new, quite original and un-used concept, compared to his or her American peer?*

PAUL: While I was working for the Americans they changed their plan and they've been changing since I last worked for them. They've changed from paying a percentage of the profits they've made, to paying on actual cover-price of the book. They have also paid on sales over 100,000 only, and also on sales from the ground up. They adjust from time to time and I don't know exactly what they're doing now. What we are giving is 4% of the cover price above 50,000 sold. Now, as far as I know it's comparable to the American payments, but it's a slightly

From CAPTAIN AMERICA #313, Al Williamson inks Neary. A dream come true for Paul.

"Tom DeFalco has final say on how we use his characters."


A LONGSHOT GAMBLE, DARLIN'. IF EVER I HEARD ONE.
HOW FORTUNATE, THEN, WE HAVE A "LONGSHOT" WITH US TO HELP PLAY IT.
HIS POWER IS HIS FANTASTIC LUCK. LET US HOPE IT SERVES US WELL.
AND IF NOT, LOGAN, THEN -- AS THE SAYING GOES--
--THIS IS AS GOOD A DAY AS ANY TO DIE.
AND THE BEST OF FRIENDS TO DO SO WITH.

Two more panels from X-MEN ANNUAL #11 — Davis and Neary.

smaller percentage being paid out. The important thing is that, as far as I know, it beats any existing British scheme. Our royalty agreement was made more with an eye to putting out a better royalty system than Fleetway, than it was to put out a royalty system that matched up with Marvel America.

BOJAN: *One thing has just occurred to me now . . . In Marvel USA where you have editors and editors-in-chief coming directly from the writer's positions, you come from the artist's profession!*

PAUL: It may look like that . . . in fact, most of the work that I was doing before I came here was not strictly to do with making drawings. I was working as a consultant at Fleetway which meant talking to young artists. It was a lot of thinking work, it was a lot of planning and analysis work and also I was writing for **Michael Bennet**, editor of CRISIS magazine. I was also writing MOTHER EARTH with **Bernie Jaye** for 2000 AD . . . so at the point when I came here I was working in other areas too. Rather a writer-artist with a consulting capacity, but certainly I didn't see myself as someone who earned a living from drawing.

BOJAN: *You're really a complete industry man . . . considering the medium of the sequential art, of course . . .*

PAUL: Everything you said is right! *(Laughter.)*

BOJAN: *Do we have here "Creating The Marvel Comics — The British Way"?*

PAUL: Yep. That's it.

BOJAN: *Are you free to expand to some parts of the foreign markets without the watching eye from across the Atlantic?*

PAUL: Yes, we want to syndicate our material in Europe and the strange thing is that the response to Marvel Comics across Europe is very different in each country, even in the countries you'd think are similar or touching each other on the map. We encountered various different requirements from the publishers that we present our work to for syndication. Some countries are just beginning to reprint Marvel material but they want to use the major heroes, they want to do SPIDER-MAN, they want to do HULK . . . and it's almost as if they're afraid to jump ahead to anything that's been produced recently. They want to concentrate on the heroes that have been the big hit at Marvel historically. And that's their right to do that. Some other countries, principally I think the Scandinavian countries, are interested in more modern concepts like HELL'S ANGEL because it's based in Chaos Theory, it's very much New Age in its outlook. And STAR COMICS in Italy, just like Scandinavian publishers they think it's modern.

BOJAN: *Shall we eventually see a rise of a new animation studio based in London? Is the TV market lucrative for this company?*

PAUL: I think it could be, but it's premature to ask that now, I think. If you look at Marvel USA, they were around for a long time before they got into the TV market.

BOJAN: *In a way you're really free to do many things on your own and on the other hand cope with the control from across the Big Water . . .*

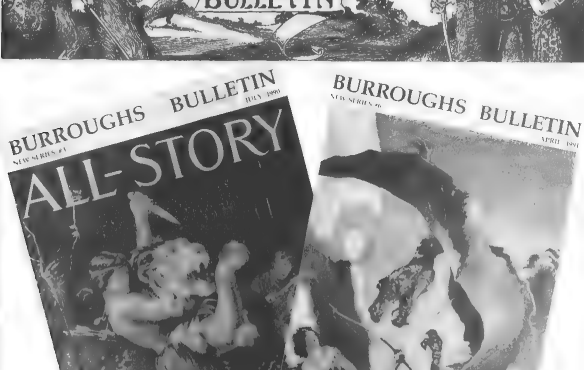
PAUL: I think "The Control" is a wrong word. I don't want to upset them and they don't want to upset me. If they take any of my characters and use them in a way I'm not happy with, it is not good for anyone . . . and the reverse is certainly true also.

BOJAN: *So you have the final word, concerning that?*

PAUL: **Tom DeFalco** has the final say on how we use his characters and I'm sure he is not going to do anything to my characters that would go against the grain. We have a terrific working agreement. Who "has to do" what hasn't even come up.

The point is, as a creative person I wouldn't feel happy just taking Spider-Man, who has been set up in a certain direction by Marvel America for over 30 years, and doing something inappropriate.

The characters at Marvel have got their distinction among the different characters and there are rules and the guidelines they've adhered to in order to keep them separate from each other. I don't want to take a character they've set up and do something irresponsible with it.



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"Artists and writers love their work and they

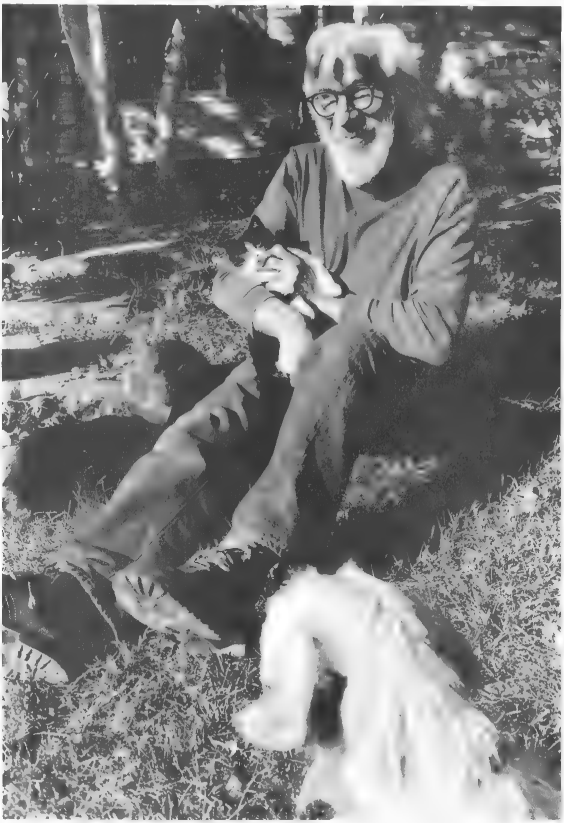


PHOTO BY EDWARD GRAZDA

want to continue doing it all of their lives."

The name Vince Fago may not readily come to mind when discussing comics professionals today, but few can match his longevity in the business. With over fifty years of practical experience Vince Fago has a diversity of credits to his name.

Growing up during the infancy of animation, Fago learned his trade as an animator and later applied that experience as editor for Timely Comics during the early 1940s. In fact, Vince developed a string of successful funny animal comics for Timely. FUNNY TUNES, KRAZY KROW, SILLY TUNES and SILLY SEAL COMICS were just a few of the comics that he drew during his tenure at Timely.

After leaving Timely, Vince worked a lifelong dream of being a freelancer into a successful career that has lasted decades. With a wide diversity of projects, from working on recreating the classics in paperback form to a ten-year stint on a syndicated comic strip, Fago has managed to live his life as a professional artist. Artist, animator, editor, inker, and penciller are just a few ways to describe the many roles that Vince Fago has enjoyed over the years.

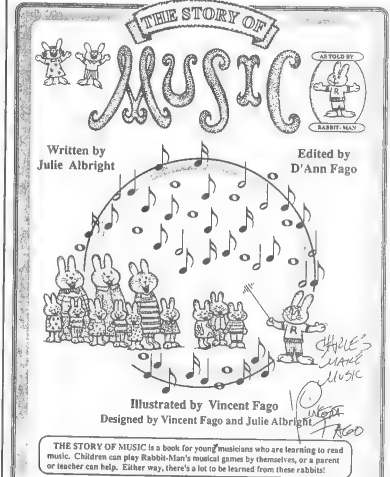
And now, at the age of 77, an age when many people have long since retired, Vince is hard at work turning out even more creative works with the help of his Macintosh computer . . .

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *It certainly seems, judging by your years in the business and the fact that you're still at it, that you love what you're doing.*

VINCE FAGO: That's certainly true! People that write or draw for a living have a certain talent. That in some ways is a disadvantage. You could make more money as an insurance salesman or something, but the fact that you love your work and that you love what you're doing is critical. I once had a friend at the HERALD TRIBUNE who said if they'd just bring his food on a plate that he'd continue to draw; he was willing to work for the food. Artists and writers love their work and they want to continue doing it all of their lives. That's the difficult part, because you get laid off, or a character goes out of style, and you find yourself out of work.

CHARLES: *You never seemed to have a problem finding work.*

VINCE: I knew I always wanted to work and I knew that if I depended on publishers — well, if they don't need you then they just don't care, they'll let you go. When I left the animation business to go into comics, it was a step down. When I was in animation there was this glamour of working with these guys that were in their thirties and were already the


THE STORY OF
MUSIC
AS TOLD BY
RABBIT-MAN
Written by
Julie Albright
Edited by
D'Ann Fago
Illustrated by Vincent Fago
Designed by Vincent Fago and Julie Albright
THE STORY OF MUSIC is a book for young musicians who are learning to read music. Children can play Rabbit-Man's musical games by themselves, or a parent or teacher can help. Either way, there's a lot to be learned from these rabbits!
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Title sheet from Vince's latest book.

VINCENT FAGO

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"My assistant did pencils for me. The inking

real giants in the industry. I was twenty-two when I got into animation. Back then **Disney** raided the entire east coast and a lot of people from places like Van Bueren Cartoons and Terrytoons went to work for **Disney.** I felt deep down that I never wanted to work for **Disney** and I really hated working in an environment where there's an artist on either side of you who is not only your co-worker but also your competitor.

CHARLES: *You worked on a wide variety of projects from animation to comic books?*

VINCE: Well, I guess you could say I did it all. I even worked on a series of coloring books and activity books for Golden Press and Whitman Publishing Company. I had one publisher that had me do twelve books a year, anything I wanted. I'd go to the library and look up jingles, make up puzzles. I was doing whatever pleased me at the time.

Back in the 1930s, animators worked under a lot of stress and strain. A lot of the early animators were old newspaper cartoonists who were wonderful people and very inspiring to someone like myself who was fresh out of high school.

CHARLES: *How did you first get involved in animation?*

VINCE: I had a very unusual childhood because I was brought up in the Bronx, right between the zoo and the botanical gardens. We used to go to the park every day, swim in the river; we had a lot of fun.

Peter Rabbit
VINCENT FAGO
SEEMS LIKE A CRUEL THING TO DO TO A LITTLE MOUSE...
DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR LITTLE ME!
NO GETTING OFF, NOW!
IT'S OKAY WITH BEARS!
FROGS, TOO!
IT'S EVERYMAN'S STEW!
SEE! EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!
HAPPY NEW

really sets the tone for the way the art looks."

My childhood was more of a fantasy like Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer. Just a block from where I lived was an old **Edison** studio where they made motion pictures and Terrytoons had a studio there. I got a job opaquing. We did CINDERELLA and a lot of commercial stuff. **Arthur Babbitt** was a big shot for **Walt Disney**; he was a genius. He and **Cy Young** were the head animators and Cy became the big special effects man for **Disney.** We were making films to try and get a release, but in those days Hollywood owned all of the theaters.

After working a year in New York I went to Detroit to work. And in those days Detroit was using as much film as Hollywood because they were making Chevrolet commercials and we were making cartoons. I stayed in Detroit for four years and then I went to Florida for another four years. In Florida, Paramount started to put money into Fleischer Studios. I was pretty good as a caricaturist, but not much of an animator because I was still young and didn't have much experience. I became good friends with **Max Fleischer** and worked for him up until the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I quit my job and went back to the Bronx to live with my mother and to be with my family.

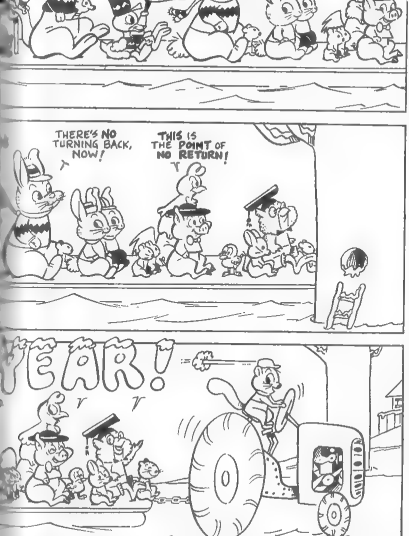
In the '40s I went to work for Marvel Comics. Well, they weren't called Marvel Comics back then. I can remember how the kids would come up to the office and watch the artists work. **Carmine Infantino** would always come up after high school to watch the artists work.

After Timely, I went freelance and stayed freelance ever since that time. I had a syndicated strip for a while and that got so hectic that I had to hire an assistant. My assistant did pencils for me for ten years when I was doing PETER RABBIT. Of course, if I didn't like what he did, I'd have to do it all over again. The inking really sets the tone for the way the final artwork looks. I used to handle a lot of work. I did LITTLE AUDREY for a while also and you need an assistant to help you from becoming fatigued. I always felt that the inker had the biggest influence over the finished product. **Richard Rockwell,** who was **Norman Rockwell's** nephew, pencilled all of **Milton Caniff's** strips. I don't know how many people knew that and my wife said maybe I shouldn't mention it. *(Laughter.)* Actually, the reason I mentioned it was to use that as a good example of just how much the inker's work influences the final product. The inker has the final control of how the product looks. The way we worked in the old days was different, too. Back in the old days we used to listen to the radio while we worked; I wonder if guys watch TV today while they work? The hours were really long; some days I'd work until two or three in the morning. On a good weekend you could make a couple of hundred dollars.

CHARLES: *Getting back to your years at Marvel, who actually hired you at Marvel?*

VINCE: Stan Lee hired me; I filled in for Stan while he was in the service. When he came back from the war he wanted me to be his assistant. I wasn't really sure about doing that because I saw what happened in the animation business and I realized that people that draw are at a disadvantage. The management people always seem to keep their jobs — but artists are always the first to go.

I have to admit that I was anti-boss, anti-establishment, but I played the


THERE'S NO TURNING BACK, NOW!
THIS IS THE POINT OF NO RETURN!
YEAR!
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..JUST THE BEGINNING!

"I was anti-boss, but I played the game long as I could."

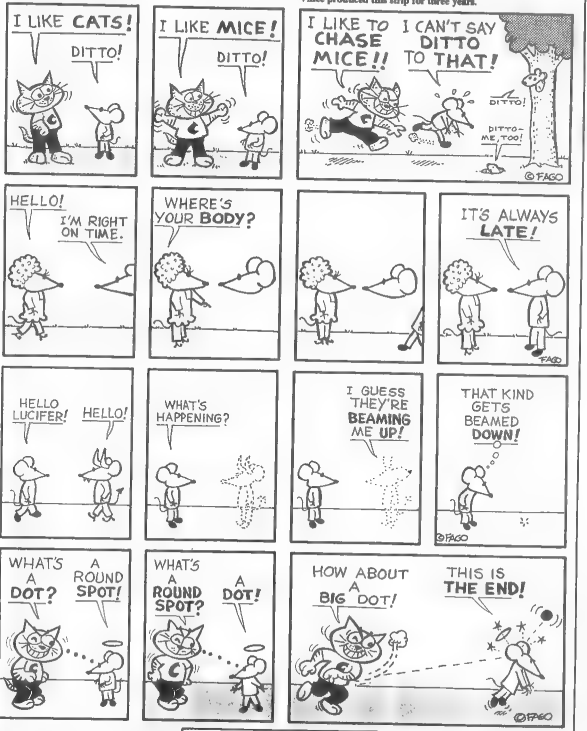
game as long as I could. I liked the idea of being opposed to success. I felt that it would make me a better cartoonist.

CHARLES: *My understanding was that you were hired by Stan because of your animation experience?*

VINCE: Well, basically, funny animal comics were big back then and that all tied in to animation. Stan and I went up to Terrytoons to see **Paul Terry** and we talked to Paul about TERRYTOON COMICS, which was the first comic Timely produced that wasn't a character out of their stable of characters. TERRYTOONS COMICS featured Mighty Mouse and it sold extremely well. We had a lot of funny animal books back then — SILLY TUNES, ZIGGY PIG,

MYSTIC MOUSE

Vince produced this strip for three years.



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"I was good with comics. I could do a page in 45 minutes."

and SILLY SEAL COMICS were just a few of them. I was very good with drawing comics. I could do a page in 45 minutes. I used to tell the guys to never start a script with two people in it; start off with one guy, have him meet another guy and then have them both in the strip. I liked a lot of white space in my strips. I felt that when a guy writes he likes to write a lot of words for a panel, whereas the artist likes to put a lot of drawings in the panel, and the two are competing against each other — unless the writer and the artist are the same. You know, Stan and **Kirby** worked very well because Stan had the right idea. **Lee** would write very lightly for **Kirby** and then write the full dialogue after **Kirby** did the pencils. Stan would draw ideas for the dialogue after seeing the **Kirby** layouts.

CHARLES: *And that idea of plotting, doing pencils, and then adding the script last is known as the Marvel style today.*

VINCE: It's a very good way to work. It allows a lot of freedom for the writer and the artist.

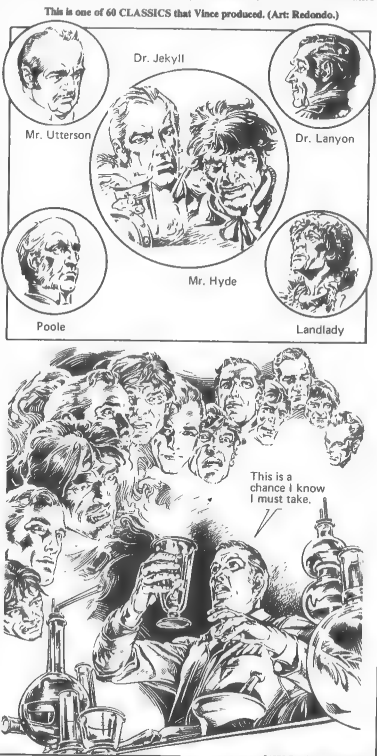
CHARLES: *How many people worked at Timely back when you were editor?*

VINCE: We started at the McGraw-Hill building with about seven or eight people working on the staff. I guess **Martin Goodman** sort of saw the handwriting on the wall and he moved to the Empire State Building. We were on the fourteenth floor and we had tremendous space. I remember, and I just thought of this, one night I was working late and a plane crashed into one of the top floors of the Empire State Building. It was very scary at the time. Anyway, that was off the subject.

We expanded to about 15 or 20 people on staff. **Syd Shores** was on staff at the time and he did all of those CAPTAIN AMERICA comics. Sometimes I'd lay out the covers or Syd would, and then there were times we'd give it to **Alex Schomburg.** Alex was pretty much elaborating on an already strong cover; he would add the detail like the rivets on the ships and stuff like that. Alex was getting something like $150 for a cover. I also had a friend from the animation business, **Harvey Eisenberg** from Brooklyn; he did all of the Tom and Jerry animation for MGM. I would send him out ten or fifteen scripts at a time and he always did a fabulous job. He eventually quit his job in animation to work as a freelancer. **Kin Platt** used to do all of the BOB HOPE stuff which was difficult stuff to write. He also drew for the HERALD TRIBUNE and he could knock out the strip in a day, an entire week's worth, dailies and the Sunday strip. He's written something like fifty-five novels. He also did a lot of the Hanna-Barbera shorts. I still keep in touch with Kin; he's eighty and I'm seventy-seven. We often laugh and discuss why we're not famous and are thankful that we're not! *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *You mention the people on staff at Timely; was Joe Simon still there*

This is one of 60 CLASSICS that Vince produced. (Art: Redondo.)



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"Timely gave me a contract for nearly

when you were at Timely?

VINCE: Simon left before I got there.

CHARLES: *My understanding was that Simon was unhappy over the page rates at the time. I know he never did work for Timely or Marvel ever again.*

VINCE: Well *(Pause).* I have to be careful about gossip and what I say. Let's just say that back then some creators had a hotel room they were working out of and doing stuff for other people. I had guys that would write the same script, change a couple of names, and sell the same story to four or five different publishing firms. People try to make money; that was the bottom line.

CHARLES: *Any freelancers that used to stop by?*

VINCE: Sure, plenty. **Mickey Spillane** used to come up a lot. One of the best writers and nicest persons to work with was **Otto Binder.** I used **Otto Binder** and **Kin Platt** on a lot of my projects. When I left Timely I did some work on the CLASSICS — twelve **Shakespeares,** twelve American histories and 24 biographies. I also did 60 film strips. It's not that I had that much talent — but I had so much talent available to me. This is getting a little off the subject but there was a comic in the '50s called SUPER MOUSE, produced by Pines. Pines was Standard Comics back then. **Paul Terry,** of course, had MIGHTY MOUSE, and the two were quite similar. Eventually, Terrytoons was bought out by CBS for five million dollars. When the studio broke up **Max Fleischer** moved to Detroit and started a studio. Back in the old days a lot of people worked at studios because they were related to the owner. I'm not going to mention names but — at Fleischer — a guy was made a director because he was a relative. In reality, he was a tailor. *(Laughter.)* At **Disney** you couldn't get anywhere unless they worked you to death during the day and then they made you go to school at night and you always worried about your job. **Disney** had spies everywhere because he was very suspicious. I guess **Disney** lost OSWALD THE RABBIT and that made him very suspicious; **Disney** wanted to make sure he didn't lose MICKEY MOUSE. **Ub Iwerks** was the one that originated MICKEY MOUSE. Well, you know, **Disney** couldn't draw. It's like **Stan Lee,** Stan can't draw and somebody had to draw the characters he created. I did SOLARMAN a few years back and I had to sign some papers that, in effect, said I had nothing to do with it.

I also did an ABC coloring book a few years ago for Whitman and it has been reprinted 33 times. The book was made famous because it was used in the movie ET. There was the page with the dog on it and they used the book to teach ET to read. I almost fell off of my seat in the movie theater when I recognized the coloring book.

CHARLES: *You also worked with M.C. Gaines for a while?*

VINCE: I worked for him after I left Timely. I worked for Timely during the war for four years and then I left there to work with **Gaines.**

Gaines was partners with **Harry Donenfeld,** who was publishing pulp magazines. They also published DE-

Two from Vince's sketchbook. Below: long panel from HOW TO DRAW (omnipressions by Vince Fago).

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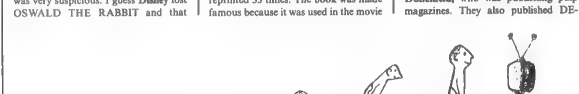
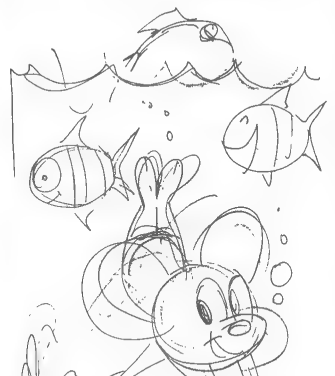


.....This.....was....the.....life....that....was.....

$1,000,000 in 1972. The work ran until 1980."



TECTIVE COMICS which is where DC Comics got its name. **Gaines** split up with **Donenfeld** and **Gaines** was bought out for $500,000. At the time, **Gaines** was putting out Bible comics; I worked for him for quite awhile and we had big plans for the future.

Unfortunately, **Gaines** was killed in a speed boat accident on Lake Placid. His son, William, who was in college at the time, started MAD magazine. The guys at MAD were very good — the cartoons were good and so were the stories, even in the beginning. I don't know how I would have done at MAD, but other things came along.

I started doing PETER RABBIT after that. I really loved to draw rabbits. PETER RABBIT fell into my lap and it was a real plum. I worked on PETER RABBIT for ten years, from 1958 to 1968, for the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. The chances of getting a syndicated strip were, like, 100,000 to 1. For me, doing the strip was my chance to get out of the city; we were living in Greenwich Village at the time and we moved to upstate New York.

I felt I had talent and I never tried to get a lot of money; I enjoyed living out in the country and bringing up two kids. Sort of like living very well, without having the means — which was great for a guy who draws for a living.

I've freelanced ever since PETER RABBIT and I've not had a regular office job with a boss since my Timely days. When I moved into the country the people on Madison Avenue were looking for a way to redo the CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED stuff. People came looking for me and when they found out I worked for Timely they gave me a contract for nearly $1,000,000. Which was ridiculous. This was 1972 and the work ran until 1980. I turned out 12 books a year and a total of 100 books were produced. I worked a lot with people from the Philippines, people like **Nestor Redondo.**

CHARLES: *$1,000,000 sounds like an awful lot of money, even by today's standards.*

VINCE: I used to get a contract to do twelve books a year. It was something like $75-85,000 for the twelve books. I had to do everything. I hired the artists and stuff like that. I traveled and lived in a lot of hotels. I went to the Philippines twice and I used to give the artists a lot of bonuses. *(Laughter.)* It was a strange business back then. I used to spend a lot of time in the library at Dartmouth College doing research and went through the newspapers to get research. We were doing American history comics and I would have to photocopy a lot of research material. I remember one time where I had over 8,000 photocopies. Then I'd package all of this off and send it to the artists in the Philippines. I remember searching for **Nestor Redondo** and it took me two months to find him. There was a two-page strip that he had done and I liked it so much that I knew I had to track him down. That's how all of those CLASSICS were done; I'd photocopy research, do little thumbnail sketches, and then send it all off to the Philippines.

"I've been from Guatemala to Greece and was never

CHARLES: *What other work have you done?*

VINCE: I did two books for Golden Press. Nonsense books, really. They were children's books and I enjoyed doing them. It's been twenty-two years now so I guess it's ancient history, but my wife got a job as the director of arts and crafts for the State of Vermont Education Department and we moved to Vermont. We moved there basically in our prime; people usually move to Vermont when they're old and retired. Right after we moved to Vermont I worked for about a year on my Zhin or Zhen books because my wife was making a pretty good living at the time. It was funny because when we moved to Vermont we rented an entire house and the landlord said he had to raise the rent because the taxes went up. I think the rent went from $75 to $77. *(Laughter.)* I worked on over 200 activity books for Golden Press, Golden Books, and Whitman Publishing. I guess that was the reason my coloring book showed up in ET. I did the book for Whitman and Warner had taken over Whitman.

CHARLES: *You left Timely and went freelance roughly about the time Dr. Fredric Wertham came out with SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT and the Senate Subcommittee hearings got under way. Did that have any effect on you?*

VINCE: Not a lot since I was freelancing and not really involved directly with any of that. I always felt that **Wertham** was really just after publicity. That's how it seemed to me. During the war, if I would lay out a cover, **Martin Goodman** would say to me, "Put a basket on the guy's head if it's going to be chopped off." *(Laughter.)* It was a lot like today's movies where you wonder just how far they'll go nowadays. We used to have a lot of fun in the studios because, if anything ever happened, the guys would draw cartoons about it. I think the bottom line after the Senate hearings and the **Wertham** thing was that a lot of guys working in the studios said it wasn't as much fun as it used to be. To me the key to all of this is having fun at it.

CHARLES: *And I guess that's why you're still at it today. Most people look forward to retirement to quit their jobs. You seem to be exploring new avenues for your work.*

VINCE: Well, I love what I do. I did a music book that took me five times longer to do than anything else I've ever worked on, but I find that the final product was a dozen times more satisfying for me. I've learned to use a computer and I moved the notes around in the music book using Aldus Pagemaker. It was a lot of fun. Doing the music book was, for me, fulfilling a lifetime ambition. I guess you could say that I really found a lifetime career that I really love. When I was younger I used to travel a lot; I've been from Guatemala to Greece and I was never happy unless I was doing something related to work. If I was sitting in a restaurant waiting for my food I'd be working on creating a puzzle or a word find book. I always had books that I was working on. It's very important for guys that draw to find a way to keep doing their art.

It seemed to me that the best way to keep happy was to always have something to work on. **Stan Lee** and I even did a strip once; it was called FRENCHY RABBIT. Frenchy, of course, had a French accent and Stan loved doing it; Stan was very, very good at stuff like that. Stan learned to write when he was very young and he made Marvel a wonderful place to work — it wasn't assembly-line work. We kept busy writing and drawing and Stan made it a very easy place to work. Work could be very difficult back then but Stan made it fun. You know back then, working in animation, if you weren't in work by five in

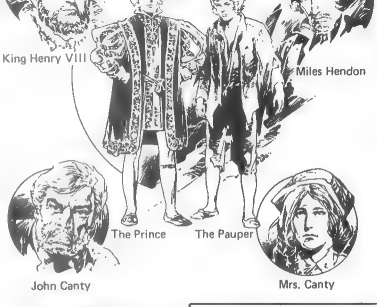
Another example of "classic" productions by Vince. Here, THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER. Vince also laid out many of the pages for artist E.R. Cruz.

Samuel Clemens
The Prince and the Pauper

Adapted by
JOHN NORWOOD FAGO

Illustrated by
E. R. CRUZ

a
VINCENT FAGO
production



happy unless I was doing something related to work."

the morning they fired you. It wasn't like that at Timely. It was funny though, amazing really. Stan would call you at any time of the day or night and give you a few more pages to script.

One of the things Stan was good at was giving raises. We'd be walking along and he'd say, "I'll give you a buck a page raise." In those days that worked out to about a $1,000-a-year raise, which was a lot of money. It was really fun back in those days. Of course, back then, books were selling through at about 90%. I remember asking **Martin Goodman** for a $100-a-week raise. Back then, that was like asking for a $1,000-a-week raise. Martin said he wouldn't give the raise to me because of general principles but that he would give me a $75-a-week raise. This was back in the 1940s when you were doing okay if you made $5,000 a year and I was making $25,000! Of course, back then no one knew about investing money and such. I look back at what people were buying brownstones for in Greenwich Village; if only I had known. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *That was an awful lot of money back then. What were page rates like?*

VINCE: Pencillers were getting about $11 a page and inkers would get $10. On stuff like CAPTAIN AMERICA the rates were $15 and $14, respectively. So when a guy got a buck a page raise it was a little over a 10% pay increase.

CHARLES: *What were page rates for writers?*

VINCE: You know, I was thinking about that, but I can't truly remember those rates. Writing comics isn't as easy as it looks and there's a lot of thought that goes into designing a character. I remember **Pauline Loth** who worked on the first MISS AMERICA book. Pauline was an old friend from the animation business. **Otto Binder** wrote it and I helped develop it. I remember that a subscription was $1 and we ended up with 20,000 one-dollar bills from all of the subscriptions. It was funny, all of those one-dollar bills came in the mail and we didn't know what to do so we stuffed the money in the filing cabinet at the office. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *One of your more recent successes was your Vermont activity book.*

VINCE: I put all of my guts into it and people really loved it. It's been out four years and I've had to reprint it. It's great because it's my book and it'll be there forever. I think this is what artistic people strive for. It's nice to have your own work that will run for as long as you want it to. If you're working for a major company and a character goes out of style then there's a good chance that you as a writer or artist could be out of a job. With something like my Vermont activity book or a syndicated strip you can pretty much control your destiny.

CHARLES: *Like Charles Schulz. His PEANUTS strip has been around forever.*

VINCE: The only difference between **Charles Schulz** and myself is $12,000,000 a month. *(Laughter.)* PEANUTS isn't a very good name for a strip because you can't copyright the name or anything. He played up the Charlie Brown character later. He once mentioned that he didn't have much of a writing or drawing ability but that it was the strange combination of both that worked so well.

CHARLES: *Getting back to Stan Lee, do you talk to him much anymore?*

VINCE: Occasionally. He's still the same, a very positive person. Writers are like that, very positive. I think it's because they work with words so much.

CHARLES: *You mentioned doing a lot of computer-generated work. Do you still do a lot of freehand sketches?*

VINCE: Yes, actually I just finished up four pages of sketches while we're talking. *(Laughter.)* The thing about the computer is that it's such an amazing tool. It has opened a lot of new avenues for my creativity.

In the old city of London, during the sixteenth century, a son was born to the poor Canty family. They already had more children than they could feed and they weren't happy about having one more.
On the same day another child was born—this time to the royal family. Indeed, all of England was filled with joyous talk of the new baby, Edward Tudor, the Prince of Wales.
This story has been told and retold, passed from parent to child for three hundred years or more. The two boys, a prince and a pauper,* looked so much alike that when a trick of fate changed them around, not even their own families could tell who was who.

*a very poor person

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LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS MEETS THE APACHE KID AYN RAND MEETS STAR TREK

Dear DAK —

Re: Issue #110.

As I read this issue I was struck with the realization how far out of touch with the whole STAR TREK cult I am. I've nothing against it, and I have long suspected I would probably fit in comfortably with the non-geek wing of Trekker-dom; but about all I really know of the whole STAR TREK "mythos" first-hand are the first five movies, all of which I enjoyed, but only one of which (THE WRATH OF KHAN) did I find anywhere close to the STAR WARS movies or E.T. in quality; and a couple of the **Marshak-Culbreath** novels, which **Howard Weinstein**, in the first interview, and interviewer **Patrick Daniel O'Neill**, both disparage. I *liked* the **Marshak-Culbreath** novels that I read, and that, too, probably puts me out of touch with the Trekkers; **Weinstein** and **O'Neill**'s comments reflect what I've heard from others, that **Marshak** and **Culbreath** were being unfaithful to the "canon," and the reason I enjoyed them was that I got a kick out of **Ayn Rand**'s Objectivism being married to the STAR TREK saga, which I had become interested in through the movies rather than the television show (of which I have seen, at most, only two or three complete episodes, once of which, "Shadow of the Gun," I watched on its first run solely because of my interest in frontier history and, particularly, "Earpiana." (That episode was the one where Kirk and his friends meet the Earp brothers.) The **Marshak-Culbreath** novel TRI-ANGLE is especially recommended to **Rand** fans, such as myself; some of the intense dialogue is almost a parody of **Rand**.

Anyway, *re:* **Howard Weinstein**: I always enjoy hearing my fellow writers discuss their art and craft, if they have anything interesting to say, and **Weinstein** did. I particularly identified with his "op-ed" experience, and his wondering if an occasional small-potatoes sale every five years or so is going to be most of the financial success he is going to have in a lifetime of writing. But isn't he happy, now, that he stuck with it? As, I think, **Stan Lee** used to say: "Excelsior!" And on to the other interviews:

Michael Jan Friedman: Okay, I guess; too esoteric for me, an outsider to the STAR TREK world, mostly (see above), and to comics, largely, in the past few years. (When you young punks out there have to start earning a living in the service economy, we'll see how much of *your* disposable income — i.e., the income **Bill** and **Hillary Clinton** haven't disposed of — *you* spend on comic books, especially when a **Clinton**-launched return to double-digit inflation jacks the price of even a CHIP'N'DALE reprint comic up to three or four bucks a copy.) Found the discussion of "darkened" heroics interesting, though. Maybe comics should go back to the roots of that kind of "darkness" and do LORD BYRON COMICS — adaptations of MANFRED, THE GIAOUR, etc. Probably only something **P. Craig Russell** would be interested in . . . if you know what I mean.

Walter Koenig: Again, okay, but to me, no more than okay. Has **Walter Koenig** ever thought of appearing in THE SEA GULL or THE CHERRY ORCHARD? Then he could say, "Well, I'm doing Chekov again?" Get it? (WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T GET IT — TOO BUSY PLAYING WITH COMPUTERS TO READ A BOOK ONCE IN AWHILE?) Anyway, too bad we couldn't have seen some examples of the "pinbacks" he discusses, especially the older ones that he describes as being fairly high-quality pop-art.

Majel Barrett: By the time I got to this interview I had pretty much exhausted my interest in STAR TREK, and I think I would have enjoyed this more had it been more personal — more about her as an actress and as the wife of **Gene Roddenberry**.

George McWhorter: Jackpot! Sorry I missed Part I. Now, almost certainly I enjoyed this one as a "read" more than the others because my interest in **Edgar Rice Burroughs** is so much greater and of longer duration than my occasional interest in STAR TREK. But I do think "Love" Boatz is a good interviewer; very possibly your "bread-and-butter" man. I would have liked to have learned a little bit more about THE LAD AND THE LION — the original story *versus* the final version — because I always thought that was one of ERB's oddest books — that strange dual storyline, with cinematic cutting back and forth between the lad-and-the-lion jungle adventure, and the Ruritanian political story with its parallels to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. (YOU COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJORS AND MBA'S CAN GO LOOK IT UP IN AN ENCYCLOPEDIA, IF YOU KNOW HOW TO USE ONE. THIS IS MY NEW *PERSONA* FOR 1993 — THE CRANKY OLD CULTURALLY LITERATE LIBERAL ARTS MAJOR.)

DLB and **McWhorter** were certainly accurate in detecting a "serious" (if one can call it that, since it was usually satirical) undertone to ERB's work: I don't think I could ever again be much of a believer after reading THE GODS OF MARS. The interview made me want to reread all of **Burroughs** — a project I keep promising myself I will do someday — especially TARZAN THE TERRIBLE, which I, too, remember as being one of the best in the Tarzan series. I recently did reread THE WAR CHIEF, the first ERB Apache novel, and I was glad to see DLB bring up the Apache novels, which I have long thought were among **Burroughs**' best work. But was ERB *really* a friend of the Apache Kid? Possible, I guess, since ERB was in the Army, stationed in the Southwest, and the Kid was a scout before turning outlaw. And it was good to see you, DAK, plugging that Marvel Comics TARZAN series you wrote before I met you; it was, I think, the only Tarzan-comics series that I recall that was true to ERB's novels, and to the character of Tarzan, although my faulty memory may be slighting some others. (Visually, I liked **Kubert's** Tarzan very much.)

"Last Word:" The first letter, "Yankee Arrogance," was terrific. But I want to take this opportunity to make it clear that I was only joking that DC Comics' "Jolting' Jim" **Chadwick** was an "incompetent creep." I have no way of judging his competence. Seriously, I figured that when I jocularly characterized him in that fashion, readers would then go on, see my name, and realize: "Aha! A family connection, no doubt! Obviously a prank!" As it turned out my letter was so long that my name didn't appear until the next page, by which time most readers — especially with the minute attention-spans that semi-literate morons have these days — probably had forgotten who Ed Hannigan is, let alone the Jim-meister. Actually, I hear that brother Jim is quite outstanding in his field — and I wish he'd get out of the field and find an actual place to live in. I understand that in the latest AMAZING HEROES, Chicago-based artist Bob McKay praises **Jim Chadwick** as "the sharpest guy in comics" and expresses hope that some day they will work together on the MAD DOG/CHIP'N'DALE crossover graphic novel.

And I'm *schtupping* Wonder Woman.

William Chadwick
PLAYBOY Mansion
Los Angeles, CA

INTERVIEW welcomes your thoughts and comments in the Last Word. Send your correspondence to: DAK, COMICS INTERVIEW, 234 Fifth Ave., Suite 301, New York, NY 10001, or fax your letter to (706) 782-6625. Please include your name and address.

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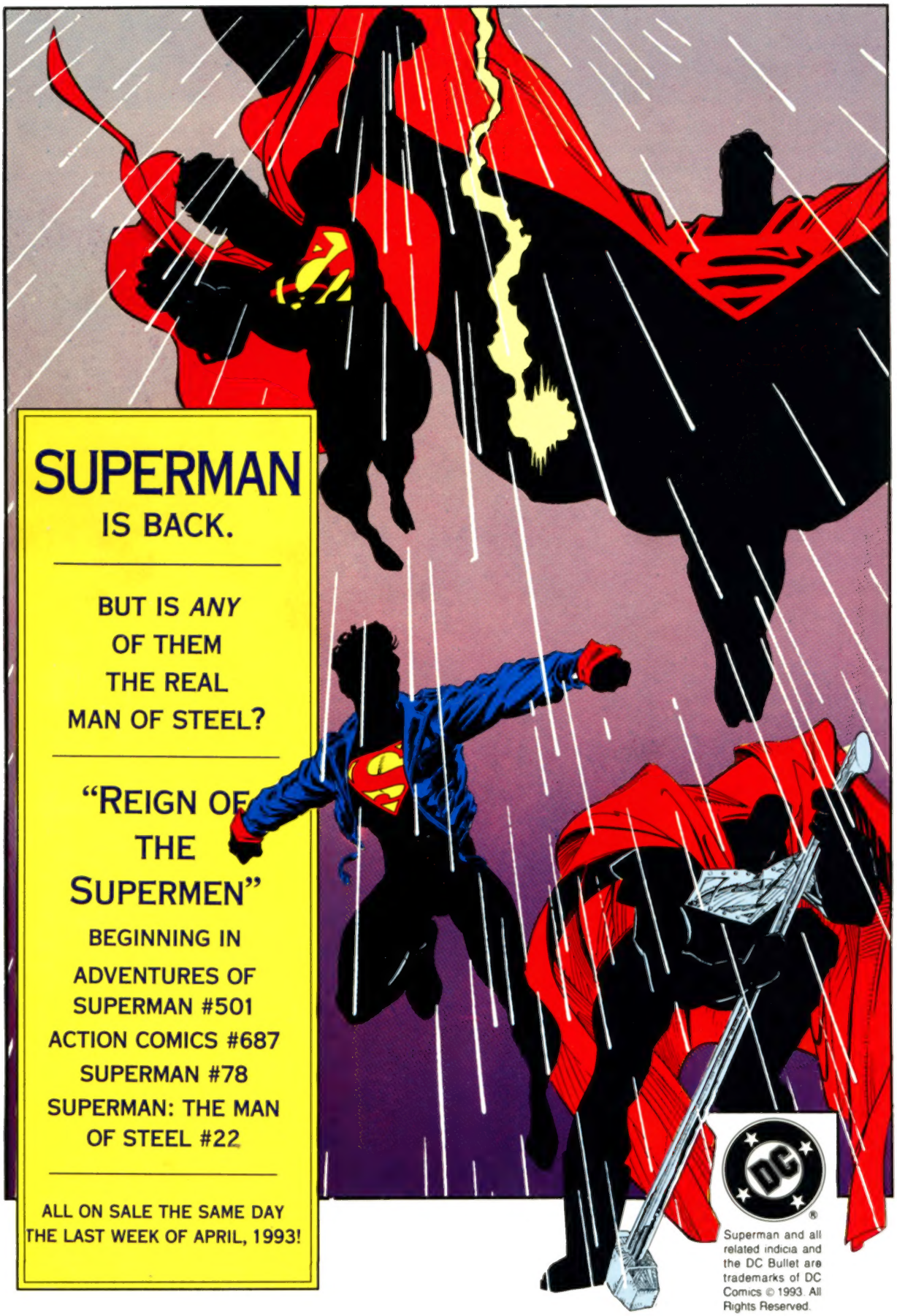

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